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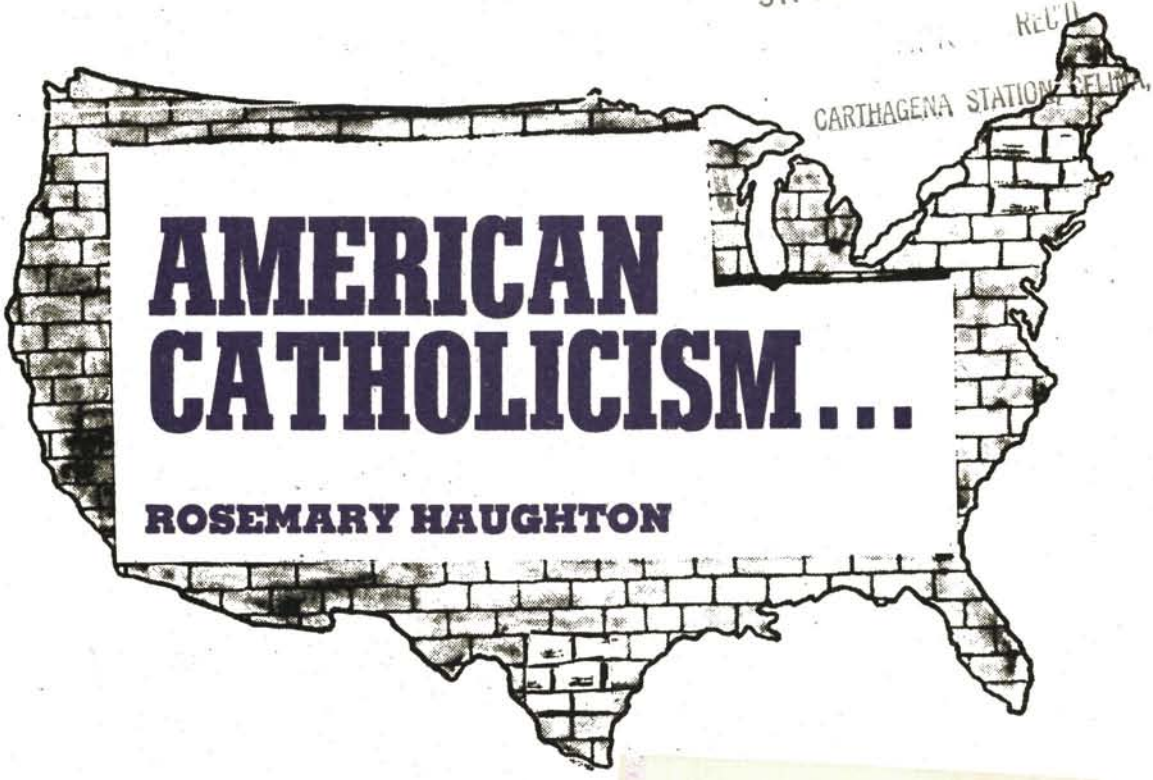

AMERICAN CATHOLICISM...

ROSEMARY HAUGHTON

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SISYPHUS **NOW COMES THE WINTER OF . . .**
BRIAN WICKER **UNIONIZING THE EDITORS**
MICHAEL NOVAK **TOWARD TELEVISION CRITICISM**
DANIEL B. SCHIRMER **SOPHISTICATED DICTATOR**
JOE HILL **POLITICS, LABOR AND MEANY**
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COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR. **MASTERS OF DISASTERS**
JOHN GARVEY **THE PLACE OF PRAYER**
REVIEWS: THOMAS E. CRONIN, ROBERT PHILLIPS, AVERY DULLES
CORRESPONDENCE: THE ABORTION DECISION, TWO YEARS LATER

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NEWS & VIEWS

Straight Face, Forked Tongue

Men talk about Bible miracles, said Thoreau, because there is no miracle in their lives. He should be around now.

Last spring, when there was no more legally appropriated money to keep the Thieu regime propped up in South Vietnam through fiscal '74, $266 million was "found" in an old ledger. The find became known as the Great Nixon Bookkeeping Miracle.

This spring, when there was no more legally appropriated money to keep the Lon Nol regime propped up in Cambodia, lo, a stray $21.5 million was "found" in a reaudit of last fiscal year.

Eschewing talk of miracles, President Ford, a more modest man, said he deplored "sloppy bookkeeping."

According to CBS, he kept a straight face.

The Oil Drain

Oil Journal published figures recently showing that continental oil production and continental oil consumption in the United States were only 5 percent apart.

Where then, asks Gilbert Wasserman in a letter to the *New York Times*, is the drain in our oil that makes the oil industry claim a shortage of about 30 percent?

Wasserman proposes a hollow-leg theory:

"We know that our military has 2,500 foreign bases. We also know that we have at least 34 military missions in client nations throughout the world with which we are undertaking to maintain the status quo despite the wishes or desires of the people in those nations. Most often this means fueling a military and civilian sector of a military dictatorship completely at our expense, the entire information being classified and thus kept from the American public.

"A rough calculation of the oil needs of these client nations yields a figure in the neighborhood of 30 percent of U.S. civilian consumption. This is most probably the cause of our abnormal shortage."

If Wasserman's construct is true, it means, says he, that "we have been standing in line for our gas while clients such as South Vietnam, Cambodia and Taiwan got theirs first—and, most outrageously, got it free, out of our pockets, and even developed black-market caches to fuel their rich tyrants."

In any case, Wasserman contends it is high time that the veil of secrecy surrounding the inventories of oil being dispensed by our corporations—some of whom enjoy vast government subsidies by reason of tax allowances—be removed.

. . . Second that motion.

By the bye, it is curious that the U.S. Government can demand anything of almost anyone, but cannot get from the oil companies an inventory of their worldwide supplies. It cannot be that such figures do not exist.

R.I.P.

Another of *Commonweal*'s valued contributors died the other day: Harry W. Flannery.

Flannery was a *Commonweal* regular back in the late-'40s, early-'50s, writing of places and people he knew intimately — like California; like Ernie Pyle.

Flannery was a large personality then, carrying the fame of several good books and the successorship to William L. Shirer in the CBS Berlin post.

After stints with the *Los Angeles Examiner* and the AFL-CIO as a news coordinator, Flannery retired to Spain. His last *Commonweal* piece was written from there, and appeared Dec. 20, 1974. It was a typical Flannery article, concerned with personal freedoms and social justice in transitional Spain.

Harry Flannery returned shortly afterwards to the U.S., aged and unwell. He died last month in Santa Monica of cancer. He was 74.

* * *

That last Flannery piece, incidentally, was titled, "Freedoms in Spain: Making No Haste Slowly." The headline told the story, and its point was further substantiated this past week by some information in Madrid's *Vida Nueva*, a Catholic weekly. *Vida Nueva* reported that since 1972, some 108 Catholic priests have been fined a total of $198,125 for preaching sermons considered "subversive" by the Franco government. Of these priests, 42 went to jail for varying terms for refusing to pay the fines.

SOS For JES

Add to the list of publications in distress the scholarly quarterly, *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*.

JES has been informed by Temple University, its underwriter, that unless it can project a nearly zero deficit budget for 1975-76 (to be submitted this month), the university will not publish the *Journal* after 1975.

JES has reduced its annual deficit by 70 percent over a three-year period; there's not much left to trim— "only bone and sinew," says editor Leonard Swidler. Meanwhile, there's inflation.

Swidler is appealing for early subscription renewals, more gift subscriptions, and donations of money to *JES*. Also helpful, he feels, would be letters to Temple president Marvin Wachman (Temple University, Philadelphia, Pa., 19122), telling him why it is important for *JES* to continue.

Vadillo, *Siempre*, Mexico

Odds and Ends

—How goes the pollution fight? Last year the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection collected $184,027 in air-pollution penalties. The year before it was $768,100.

—How to neutralize a potentially useful sourcebook: provide text, illustrations, tables, bibliography, but don't bother to index the end result. Example: *American Catholicism and European Immigrants*, by Richard M. Linkh. Publisher: Center for Migration Studies.

—Signs-of-the-Times-Department: On the bargain table in Walden Book Shop, McLean, Va: *White House Sermons*, with an introduction by Richard M. Nixon. It was originally priced at $7.50. Walden will take .45¢.

—Postscript to Camelot, courtesy AP from Leukas, Greece: "Caroline Kennedy and her brother, John Jr., arrived today at this island near Skorpios [for the funeral of Aristotle Onassis]. Young Kennedy, 14, expressed seeming displeasure at curious bystanders by sticking out his tongue at them. He and his sister, 17, carried comic books as they entered a waiting limousine."

JOHN DEEDY

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CORRESPONDENCE

Abortion Debate

San Antonio, Texas

To the Editors: Father Decker's article on abortion [Feb. 14] shows an overall perversity of legal, social and political understanding, but there are two outstanding basic misconceptions. First, regarding the essential concept of freedom, Father Decker suggests that maintenance of free conscience is the only criterion of freedom. Rather free conscience must be balanced against requirements for an ordered society. In establishing laws society does not inquire into the freedom of conscience of the murderer nor the runner of red lights on the extremes, nor should it.

This raises the second basic error of equating realization of a Constitutional amendment prohibiting abortion to the working of some collective Catholic demagoguery. If the Amendment passes into law, it will not be for religious reasons but because the democratic majority of Americans require it for a well-ordered society.

CHARLES A. SCHMIDT

Arlington, Va.

To the Editors: I wish to commend you for the written debate and rebuttals, "The abortion decision: two years later" which appeared in the February 15, 1975 issue. The writings of Fr. Decker and Prof. Trinkaus are provocative; I should hope their writings would receive wider distribution so as to stimulate much needed discussion on the position they have presented respectfully.

In Father Decker's rebuttal Prof. Trinkaus is quoted followed by the criticism of "begging the question." This appears as follows:

> "The moral argument against abortion is based on the premise that there is a victim—a tiny, helpless, innocent human being whose very life is being taken for the convenience of others." This is simply the

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REGIONAL ARMS RACE

"Merchants of Death" is what they used to call the world's arms suppliers—a somewhat melodramatic term, perhaps, but painfully accurate. And how sad for those who love their country that the United States has become the preeminent contender for the title of world champion death merchant, followed only by that other superpower, the USSR.

Our national arms trade has tentacles around the globe, but a good example of its mode of operation and its perils is currently provided in our dealings with the nations of the Persian Gulf. In the last year this country has sold about $5 billion in arms to Persian Gulf states, particularly to those two traditional rivals, Iran and Saudi Arabia, but in lesser amounts to Kuwait and Oman. The magnitude of this aid for the area is illustrated by some comparative figures: $4 billion in arm sales to Iran on top of $2 billion the year before, as compared with the $1.5 billion arms grant to Israel during and after the October 1973 war.

We not only sell arms; we train the locals in their use: the Defense Department has nearly $700 million in contracts to train military personnel in the Persian Gulf area. Private *entrepreneurs* in the kill business are in a highly competitive endeavor. Some idea of the scope of the problem can be seen in the proportionate amounts of Defense Department dollars involved: the contracts with Iran and Saudi Arabia for technical assistance and training amount to $676 million, according to the *N.Y. Times*, as compared with $51 million for 32 other countries around the world.

Iran and Saudi Arabia are not direct participants in the Israeli-Arab confrontation, but is there any real guarantee that our arms shipments will not find their way to other Arab countries and thus further exacerbate a situation we are trying to calm? Nor can the aid to Iran be justified on the basis of Soviet aid to its rival, Iraq, for that is far less than what the U.S. is supplying the Shah of Iran, who makes no bones about his desire to

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restore the days of imperial splendor to his country. Also worrisome on this score is the proposed $7 billion sale of half-a-dozen nuclear reactors to Iran. All would be glad to see that underdeveloped country gain needed electrical power, but are the guarantees surrounding this sale sufficient for us to be sure that Iran will not follow India's example and end up in possession of nuclear weapons?

All of this involves only our newest arms deals in the Persian Gulf; it says nothing about our recent decision to lift the arms embargo on Pakistan, thus encouraging an arms race in that area, or the vast ramifications of our arms dealings in other parts of the world. It was against this background that Senator Edward M. Kennedy, with strong liberal backing, called for a six-month moratorium on arms sales to Persian Gulf states to give Congress and the administration a chance to reassess arms policies in the region. Expressing "deep concern over the massive and apparently indiscriminate arms sales we have been making to countries of the Persian Gulf," and arguing that the U.S. was embarking on "a risky path" in becoming involved in a dangerous arms race, he saw a potentially disastrous parallel. "It was little more than a decade ago," he said, "that we watched a parade of United States military advisers streaming to another volatile part of the world—Indochina—to assist 'internal security forces' to operate the massive quantities of tanks, aircraft and other military equipment that we were sending them. Sending large numbers of Americans to the Persian Gulf to engage in military training will compromise our independence from what happens there. It is only a short step from there to Americans serving as mercenaries in foreign wars." So it looks to Senator Kennedy, and as the tragedy of Vietnam intensifies, we should heed his warning.

KISSINGER FAILS

The failure of Secretary Kissinger's Middle East peace mission, and the collapse of the military situations in Cambodia and South Vietnam, represent major setbacks for American foreign policy. The developments are intensely disappointing and with frightening implications, particularly for the millions of innocent and helpless caught up in events over which they have not the remotest control. Most of what happened in recent days, however, was predictable.

The Middle East mission, for instance, was a large and, some say, arrogant gamble. Bilateral personal negotiations are chancy at any time. Undertaken when the key negotiator's influence is on the wane, they are almost foredoomed. Kissinger's influence has been deteriorating over a period of months, to the extent, indeed, that well before his latest gambit portions of the press were speaking of resignation soon. It is perhaps tendentious to describe that gambit as self-serving, an attempt to reclaim lost personal prestige as an international wonder man; it is not unfair, however, to state that Kissinger overreached himself and that in foregoing traditional diplomacy for flashy free-lancing; he has made an exceedingly dangerous situation much more difficult. Wittingly or not, he has cast Israel as the villain in the way of a Middle East peace arrangement; he may have put Egyptian President Sadat at a disadvantage in the Arab community of nations by projecting him as conciliatory in measure that he definitely is not; most certainly, he has further eroded his own reputation—to a degree that may not be fully appreciated until the convening of the peace conference in Geneva.

Russia then will sit as a party to the Middle East deliberations, a factor not likely to make the American role any easier. Still, Russia's presence will represent some realities of international politics. Months ago, former Undersecretary of State George Ball argued that meaningful negotiations in the Middle East could not exclude Moscow-Washington understanding on broad principle, and he plumped then for joint U.S.-USSR sponsorship of a Middle East peace program. This will now come to pass, but under circumstances which will add nothing to the strength of American diplomacy. So much the worse if Israel is penalized as a consequence.

* * *

While Kissinger was floundering in the Middle East, his Indochina patch-peace came apart. An angry Kissinger would make Congress the scapegoat by its disinclination to provide yet more military funds for Cambodia and South Vietnam. But Congress' position is a defendable one. Slaughter and devastation cannot be funded endlessly. There had to come a time when Congress had to say, 'Millions for humanitarian purposes, but not one cent more for killing.'

What is happening in Southeast Asia is tragic beyond words, but it is hypocritical on our part to feign surprise. The Paris Peace was designed primarily to get the U.S. out as a direct participant in a war that had no popular backing among the American people; it was not realistically designed to bring peace to the Vietnamese people. If the Communists have not lived up to the accords, neither have other parties. For example, the U.S. pledge to end military involvement was heavily qualified. As the recent statement of American religious leaders noted, two years after Paris American bombs were still being dropped from American planes flying out of former American military bases.

None of this is to say that the U.S. can or should wash its hands of Cambodia and South Vietnam. No one is more responsible for the plight of the people there than the U.S. This country has tremendous residual obligations. But these are essentially humanitarian. If they are conceived of as military, and so implemented, the U.S. is back into the spider's web.

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NOW COMES THE WINTER OF . . . .

As for our decades-old Indochina policy, it's not so much that at long last there's light at the end of the tunnel, as that the tunnel itself is collapsing upon us.

At this writing, the Lon Nol regime in Cambodia is approaching its demise; the South Vietnam dictatorship of General Thieu is shrinking itself into military enclaves, reminiscent of General Gavin's proposal made several years ago. The scripture, according to John Foster Dulles, has been discredited. If any domino theory is valid, it is one that has toppled the Southeast Asian maladventures of successive presidential administrations—Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy and Nixon.

White House couriers find congressional corridors no longer predictably hospitable to financing our war by proxy abroad in a region of the world marginal to our national security. Chastened or repentant warriors of the Cold War now are willing to conduct their post-mortems before congressional committees. The hold-outs at the Pentagon and quasi-official garrisons of the Old Order are alarmed and angered. The other day, Defense Secretary Schlesinger refused to appear before the Senate Budget Commission as part of a panel to discuss the next year's military budget because Paul Warnke, former Assistant Secretary of Defense under Johnson and one of the chastened ones, was included.

The critical analyses of how we became mired in the Big Muddy in Indochina are not being heard with glee by reasonable congressional critics, such as Senators Church and Mathias. More in sorrow than in . . . Cajoled by Kennedy, scoffed at, or worse, by Johnson, and investigated by Nixon, such critics have publicly, at least, declined to have their inning of self-congratulatory justification which they might well permit themselves.

No, they have knowledge of the American temper. Now, their informed judgment tells them, comes the winter of our national discontent. In retaliation, the dishes will be broken over the heads of those still in authority and those long since departed—whether dead or alive. Perhaps, a better imagery is that the bucks are being assembled to be passed and hurled about. President against Congress; demagogues against both; academicians rewriting history on the basis of snippets.

For weeks, Henry K sat this one out in the Middle East, where he was trying unsuccessfully to fashion a diplomatic house of cards that he had hoped would survive until he can disembark from the Ship of State with his Nobel Prize (for peacemaking) untarnished. Back home, Henry J in the Senate still wears his armor, but has not mounted his charger on this occasion—thereby giving Robert Novak, one of the fastest guns in the Washington press corps, an opportunity to accuse him of moving "leftward" in a search for support for his campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination. The Defense Secretary blames the deteriorating situation in Vietnam and Cambodia on the niggardliness of the Congress in the amount of military and economic assistance it has furnished. The fact is that the American people have furnished more than 50,000 dead soldiers and nearly $150 billion in tax money. If Congress is to be blamed, it is because the people's assembly did not call a halt to the bloody business years ago. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs-of-Staff, General Brown, has misspoken himself again this year—and it's only April. Earlier, he inferred that American Jews may hold a dual nationality because of their support for Israel. Just recently, the General suggested that civilians had stabbed the military in the back—a disconcerting echo of another man's theme who rose to power in Germany in the 1930s.

Who, we might ask in anticipation, will be the John Paton Davies and Owen Lattimores and Stewart Services of this most recent encounter with the Asian mainland?

Unfortunately, witch hunts burn people not policies drafted and formulated in the snuggeries of statecraft. And it is the policies that need to be reassessed, reformed and implemented. The existing one, even to the most vehement supporter of the American Empire, appears to be beyond salvage—no Senator Vandenberg on hand to tell a sitting President that the only way to get his way in foreign policy is to go to the stump and the air-waves and "scare the hell out of the country."

The foreign-policy consensus, rooted in the experiences of World War II, is coming apart. It worked as applied in the industrially developed regions. It floundered in those areas historically disparate from our own. It failed when applied to those "countries" which were more groupings of ethnic, even tribal associations, culturally disparate from ours, and having at most a rudimentary sense of "nationhood," only now becoming assertive and then assertively so against their patrons—us.

Perhaps, our perception of foreign policy has now matured to the point that our governors will not insist on a "bi-partisan" foreign policy with its implication of disloyalty to those who don't adhere. In Britain, the major parties can have discernible differences, as in respect to membership in the Common Market, without members from one set of benches shouting "traitor" at those facing them on the other.

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It should not be beyond consideration that an aggressive foreign policy may not be suitable—or, at least, continuously. Inextricably entwined with foreign policy of whatever tone and substance is domestic policy. Currently, lower-income Americans, as distinct from the old-hand liberals with their support of an internationalist order, are coming to an understandable conclusion that the burdens of our foreign policy since World War II have been inequitably shared domestically. Their sons are the victims of warfare and their incomes primarily victimized by high prices of imports such as petroleum. Nor, for that matter, are major sections of American industry profiting by American foreign policy. It is doubtful that we can be summoned by a new President calling for any sacrifice in our role as watchmen on freedom's tower. At least, not for a long while. The faith and trust, essential to successful foreign policy, is dispersed. That needn't mean we retreat into our boroughs as the only alternative to embarking on Kiplingesque adventures on the burgeoning and unstable frontiers of the world. Just something in-between.

The Congress should undertake to reassess our foreign policy in a thoughtful way. President Ford has willingly testified before a congressional committee on another matter. If amenities were observed, he could again sit down with members of the Senate and House foreign relations committees—in closed session, if need be, and just "talk shop" without any participant trying to win a black belt in political karate.

SISYPHUS

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FROM BRITAIN

UNIONIZING THE EDITORS

The balance between individual liberty and personal security is a very delicate one. To ensure the liberty of the majority, in a period of indiscriminate terror and mass organizations, it is paradoxically necessary to reduce the freedom of individuals to do "their own thing": since "their thing" may well be planting bombs in pubs or kidnapping the daughters of the rich and vulnerable. As a citizen of Birmingham, at a moment when Birmingham has temporarily been in the world's headlines, I feel particularly keenly the delicacy of this balance. While the vast majority of people here clearly feel that Mr. Jenkins' Prevention of Terrorism Act is too soft, rather than too hard, on the terrorist threat (and that hanging itself is too good for the terrorists) the dangers to genuine liberties that it poses are beginning to be felt. In view of a recent case, in which the jury trying two Irishmen found in possession of circuit diagrams for bombs, failed to agree on a verdict, the possibility that the police may be holding a good many innocent people in gaol in England (not to mention Northern Ireland) is beginning to worry thinking people.

The most worrying part of the new Act, as I see it, is that people can now be held, not because the Home Secretary had good evidence to suggest that they may be involved in terrorism, but simply because he *suspects* they are. How can you defend yourself against the Home Secretary's naturally suspicious nature? Evidence can be refuted: but suspicions can remain suspicions whatever the evidence or lack of it.

However, the threat to individual liberty and security is not only from the terrorists. The mass organizations are also in the news for the same reason—and here I mean in particular the trade unions and the government. While the debate in the pubs is about whether to hang the bombers, the debate in the newspaper offices is about whether editors should be allowed to stay outside the journalists' trade union. This is not an argument that is likely to fire the interest of the average working man: but it is an important one all the same, and has implications for the press the world over.

The issues are complicated, and a bit of background is necessary to understand them. Until 1971, the "closed shop" in Britain was perfectly legal, and in many industries normal. That is to say, it was legal to require that all workers in a plant should belong to a union. Indeed, in a few industries—notably, and perhaps ironically, the newspaper industry—you had to have a union card *before* you could get a job. (It has long been the case that nobody could get into the newspaper printing trades without an influential trade union friend or relation). More often, you had to join a union as soon as you had been taken on. Allowances were usually made for "conscientious objectors," like Jehovah's Witnesses, but in general the "closed shop" in the second sense of the term was a part of normal industrial relations in many large firms, and both unions and management supported it, though for different reasons. Unions liked it because it gave more power to their elbows; management liked it because it gave the work force stability.

But in 1971 the Conservative government, in its "abrasive" phase under Heath, passed the Industrial Relations Act, which made the compulsory closed shop illegal. Ostensibly this measure was aimed at the restoration of an individual liberty: to belong to a union or not. In fact, it was part of a strategy to curb the growing power of the big unions to dictate to government and

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management. But in any case, whatever the true underlying principle involved, it didn't work. I think most "moderates" on the Conservative side, as well as the whole of the Labor Party, would admit as much. So would many industrial managers. You can't compel people by law to abjure long-standing and traditional solidarities, any more than you can abolish racial discrimination merely by making it illegal. And whereas the (valid) argument for an anti-discrimination law is that it helps to create an "atmosphere" of disapproval which will act as a background of encouragement to racial equality, the parallel argument in the industrial field is simply false. The "atmosphere" the Industrial Relations Act created was not an encouragement to individual freedom. It simply introduced an inappropriate legalistic mentality into a subtle complex of human relationships and emotional attitudes.

When the Labor Party returned to power, it set about abolishing the Industrial Relations Act, and making "closed shops" legal once again. But by a number of unexpected Parliamentary mixups, the Opposition managed to secure some amendments to the Bill which Mr. Michael Foot (Secretary for Employment) had introduced in order to restore the pre-1971 situation. These gave the individual worker protection on two counts: he could not be dismissed from his job just because he had been excluded or expelled from his union, and he could not be "fairly" dismissed just because he refused to belong to a closed shop. These points were substantial, for clearly individuals *do* need some such protection from victimization if the system is to be remotely fair. But Mr. Foot's proposal is that, instead of trying to give such protection by a complex and unenforceable *law,* there should be an appeals machinery set up by the Trades Union Congress itself, to hear complaints of this sort.

Mr. Foot's proposal has the merit of being acceptable to the unions, and therefore workable. But it has the drawback that the party being complained against will appear to have a lot of power over the appointment of the judge and jury. (Many Labor supporters are keen proponents of the view that complaints against the *police* should not, as at present, be dealt with by the police themselves, but by a clearly independent body. The parallel with the present issue is too awkwardly close for their true comfort.)

Now the journalistic aspect of this whole argument is a special case of the general issue. It is certain that much of the opposition to Mr. Foot's measure comes simply from those professional and managerial côteries who don't like the idea of trade unions, and don't want to have anything to do with them. This recalcitrance is understandable, for the unions in Britain have a natural affinity with the Labor Party, and these new potential recruits to their ranks would refuse to admit any such affinity. But that is a separate, though difficult issue: and in any case, the fact is that closed shops are not being made compulsory, they are just once again being *allowed.* If the various parties in a particular industry don't want to operate one, they don't have to. The fact that, on a "one man one vote" principle, the professionals and managers would be outvoted, is just their bad luck: it is hardly an argument, in itself, against permitting closed shops where a majority of those involved want one. But the claims of the press editors are different: or so they say. For they fear that if the National Union of Journalists (an increasingly militant union) insists that they, like everyone else on the writing side of newspapers, must belong to the NUJ, and if they could face exclusion or dismissal from the union (and hence their jobs), with nothing but a TUC tribunal to appeal to, just because they wrote things the union disliked, then the whole freedom of the press, and hence of democracy itself, would be endangered.

The editors have a point. Who are they responsible to—their own union, or their readers? However sympathetic an editor may be to the trade union cause, a frightful dilemma could easily arise here. Reassuring noises from the TUC, about the impartiality of its own proposed machinery for appeals, are not enough. The mood of the TUC could easily change. And furthermore, not only must justice be done, it must be seen to be done. The parallel with the police-complaints issue is too close, and too relevant, to be dismissed. You cannot consistently demand one thing for the police and another for the press.

But Mr. Foot has a point, too. He asks why should people in one kind of managerial position (i.e., editors) be given special rights denied others? And how would you define the difference, in legal terms that still conformed to the realities of the situation? If the law exempts editors, what about the pressure that will build up for exempting all sorts of other democratically important people?

That is where the argument stands at present. It will flare up again soon, when Parliament has another go at it. I wouldn't pretend to foretell the outcome. If Mr. Foot really insists on getting his own way, the government's Parliamentary majority can presumably ensure that he does so. There is no doubt too that the genuine issues of principle involved will be mixed up, in the Tory press especially, with a great deal of anti-union bombast. (The fact is that a TUC tribunal would be just as likely to be fair and impartial as any tribunal that is not wholly independent can be: certainly as fair as a tribunal set up by the press itself, and much more workable than the old Industrial Relations Court of the Tory Act.) But whichever way the issue goes, one feels that a nasty taste will be left in the democratic mouth, even if what has to be swallowed turns out not to be the deadly poison which many people fear. BRIAN WICKER

(Brian Wicker is Commonweal's *regular correspondent in Britain.)*

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TOWARD TELEVISION CRITICISM

MICHAEL NOVAK

The Aspen Institute is sponsoring a workshop on television criticism. In two workshops so far, a number of points have emerged rather clearly. I state some of them as propositions, in a descending order of certainty.

(1) Prime-time television is worthy of a serious critical effort. If one watches a show, and tries to criticize it afterward, the effort bears fruit; and the shows bear the scrutiny. The television camera is a very rich instrument of creativity, and the power of its impressions, even when the subject matter is prosaic, is quite remarkable. Thus a segment from *All in the Family,* or *Rhoda,* or other shows can generate quite intense and fruitful argument about values, perceptions, characterizations, artistic techniques and the rest.

(2) It seems a shame that educational systems and universities limit themselves to training the literary imagination, and neglect the training of the television and cinematic imagination, in which we are all immersed for so many hours. (Even the college-educated watch 35-42 hours a week, on the average.)

(3) As a medium, television is not identical to cinema. Some of the things that distinguish television are: the place in which it is meant to be shared—the private home rather than a public theater; the proportional size and intimacy of its images; the commerce of its images with domestic reality and with the reality of the "news"; the limited and highly structured time frames in which it is obliged to work; its need to have materials for every hour of every day, relentlessly.

There might be ten first-rate movies made in a vintage year. Ten a year might be quite enough to satisfy even the most devoted lover of films. But those who watch TV need a new show—and more than one new show—every evening. The production of ten first-rate TV shows in a year would not seem to be a sufficient quantity to satisfy our needs.

The kind of signal used by television presents a quite different physiological experience from that provided by film. And the conventions of television seem to be somewhat different from those of film. And the symbolic universe within which the images of television are shown—the universe of television itself—seems to be different from the universe of films within the images of film are grasped.

There are probably a good many other differences as well. The point is that television is *sui generis.*

(4) Thus we need to develop a special aesthetic for television. We are probably at the same stage in this respect as film criticism was thirty years ago. At that time, too, not very many persons took the movies seriously. Critics had to establish that there was such a thing as "the fact of film." They had to establish the need to discuss film in a quite new vocabulary. Well, we need to identify "the fact of television," and we need to arrive at a satisfactory vocabulary.

(5) The position of the television critic needs to be established. There are many different kinds of art. One kind of art consists in the creation of beautiful objects—a statue in a park, a painting on a wall, even perhaps a poem for a special occasion, a novel meant to be read as an intellectual occasion, savored slowly, and not merely to pass the time. Another kind is found in the arts of everyday living: not only the arts of cooking, but also the arts of designing furniture, decorating the home, conversation, sizing up the characters of others, administration, leading a discussion, and many others. Perhaps television is more like the common arts than like the fine arts.

One may make fun of the relatively small audience that watches Channel 13 in New York, but even on a single evening that audience probably exceeds the number of readers of the best selling books. So perhaps the television critic is in a quite different circumstance from the critic of opera or of dance or of the cinema or of books. For one thing, the critic of televison can take for granted that even more people have watched the productions he is writing about than will read his column. Besides, many of the viewers of television, who may be more engaged in television than he is, may also have a larger experience of television than he has. They may enjoy its comments on itself and its self-referential moments (which are many) with greater insight. Expertise in watching television—in the simple act of watching with appreciation and enjoyment—has its own breadth and depth. There is a particular kind of sophistication present in people who watch television a great deal.

(6) Often a television show exceeds the bounds of mere entertainment; it generates imaginative symbols which feed the entire culture. That is to say, "television facts" sometimes become cultural facts. It is possible that Matt Dillon, Archie Bunker and other figures from television function almost like the symbolic heroes of the literary imagination—like Huck Finn and the Deerslayer and Daisy Miller, like Babbitt, "the old man and the sea," and others. (Listen to college students reminisce about the television figures of their childhood.)

Such images help us to understand the world around us. They create the symbolic theater that shapes our psyches. Here the television critic may play a special role in society. He is not only criticizing television for its own sake, although that is an im-

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A BRITISH EYE'S VIEW

ROSEMARY HAUGHTON

American Catholicism through the eyes of an affectionate outsider

'Some of my best friends are Americans.' This is the familiar prelude to criticism, but it is only because it is true that I feel able to offer what I hope is appreciation as well as criticism. For the eye of the affectionate outsider is often able to indicate what close relatives cannot perceive because they are *too* close to it. At a time when Christians are doing a lot of soul-searching, it may be that a friend and admirer with a different cultural background (though half-American by birth) can help in the process of self-criticism. (There are other, equally important, criticisms to be made of European forms of Christianity, but we need Americans to develop them.)

I do not offer to do this because Americans themselves are not sufficiently self-critical. On the contrary, American Christians seem to me to spend too much time and energy in bewailing their sins. This is part of what is bothering me. In about ten years of periodic lecture tours around the United States, I have met an astonishing variety of American Christians, and have been thrown over and over again into that kind of intimacy which often seems possible with a person who is here today and gone tomorrow. I have been deeply impressed with the amount of energy and dedication and enthusiasm which is going into all kinds of Christian projects, from higher education and 'communications' to ghetto neighborhood schemes and meditation sessions. And everywhere I have encountered a willingness to realize the shortcomings of Catholic Christians, as a group, and desire to overcome these. The things that are wrong are clearly and fully expressed, with the well-developed jargon of political and philosophical analysis, which everyone seems to have at his or her fingertips.

So it was only after some time that a vague sense of unreality began to make itself felt. It was an even longer time before I was able to pin down the reason for my unease, combined as it was with real affection and admiration for so many people whom I met, and for the work they are doing. It is still very hard to express precisely, but I feel it is worthwhile to make the effort, because it seems to me that there is a tremendous spiritual power in American Christianity, much of it muted and even turning sour because of an odd pervasive type of what I can only call radical smugness.

I think it happens as a direct result of the communal breast-beating and sackcloth-and-ash distributing which is such a marked feature of the American Catholic scene. The constant discussion and elaboration of such self-accusations becomes, after a time, a kind of formula, the repetition of which is easily equated with the experience of real humility. I have an almost awe-struck admiration for the American addiction to education, and the way adults go on studying, and keep a real curiosity and appetite for learning. It is an aspect of the special quality of intellectual adventurousness which European culture has partly lost. But it has its weakness, which is an addiction to words and concepts, as a game. It's a good game, but it can be abused, and it is being abused when the use of new psychological and theological and moral language-styles, devised to express important aspects of contemporary experience, are regarded as substitutes for dealing with the experiences.

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Those who have thus done public penance (in acres and acres of newsprint) are thereby discouraged from any really searching self-examination at the level of immediate experience.

The difference, here, is not that between communal and individual conscience, but between the analysis of guilt and the personal repentance. The Gospel demand is always for personal *and communal* repentance and conversion, and this is fully realized, but because the real sins of the Catholic body have been analyzed and acknowledged, and renewal undertaken, it is common for this process to be regarded as equivalent to the personal metanoia from which alone 'other Christs' can be born.

To give an example, I have had the experience of being welcomed, befriended, surrounded with gestures of brotherly love and intimate sharing among peoples whose lives were simple, open and joyfully dedicated to the service of others. I was moved and grateful, yet uneasy. Was it just British reserve? It took me a long time to admit to myself that the whole thing felt a little phony. This was not because anyone was insincere or shallow, but rather, I think, because the response of that group was a good, simple, loving response to the charm of a very attractive lifestyle—that of the Gospel. It isn't possible to be sure, and I hesitate even to suggest this kind of judgment, but it seems to me, looking back with real gratitude and affection, that the people in that group (with maybe one exception) had not realized the Gospel demand as one for fundamental and painful personal transformation. They had not known the annihilation of the natural self as it perceives its own total inadequacy for the joy offered. They had seen something good and happy and embraced it. That is good, but it is not enough. "All these things I have kept from my youth"— and Jesus *loved* him, he was good and generous and lovable. It wasn't enough. It still isn't, and paradoxically the giving up of personal wealth and comfort, and the abandonment of the prestige of the old-style Church, even the public admission of past corporate sin, can actually make it harder to 'leave all things.'

I met, once, a youngish priest in a wealthy parish in California. He lived in considerable comfort, and worked hard in a traditional type of middle-class parish. He was doing a lot of good work with children and in the poorer areas, but he was deeply distressed by his identification with a way of life whose values he felt to be anti-human. He was in a state of agony, torn between loyalty to real people who valued and needed him, and loyalty to the Gospel which, at times, seemed to present merely abstract demands, unrelated to what actually went on around him. Yet these demands *were* real, because they were the demands of Christ. This man was being brought down to the depths of real, not token, humiliation. It is there that regeneration begins. I have met others in the same agony, like a Sister in the Midwest, acutely aware of the too-comfortable conformity of her community to the ideals of the American Dream, yet bound both by fidelity to her vows and real love for other individuals, both students and Sisters, who needed her where she was. Should she leave what had become a mockery of the foundress' ideals? Or stay to help those who needed her so much?

In both these cases, and so many others, people are *suffering* in reality, in their own lives, the results of those corporate sins which are so constantly bewailed. And whichever choice is finally made, in these and similar cases, to 'stay' or to 'go,' the person who has been baptized with this baptism will be a point of regeneration for the Christian body.

This is not to say that such groups as the one I described before are not good. They are very good, full of hope for the future, places where people can realize how futile and wasteful are most of the aims that our society sets itself. There are people all over the United States who are discovering the happiness of this stripping away of unessentials, this return to simplicity of life and sincerity of speech and feeling, whether in new communities, or just in families or groups of neighbors. But this kind of thing should be the place where people can begin to discover God and live, by personal repentance and humility.

Is it too much to ask? It would certainly be ridiculous to expect that all those who want, now, to make Christianity real and free from its links with destructive systems and ideas should suddenly be capable of conversion. The hampering, unreal thing is the unintended by-product of a very necessary communal heart-searching. It is also due to the abuse, in the past, of the ideal and practice of humility, and of personal self-examination. When the struggle for holiness became a worried scrabbling around in one's own motives, and humility was an unreal self-depreciation, then it was right and necessary to assert the goodness of the human nature God made, and the need for proper self-respect and fulfillment of personality and talents.

I have seen enough of the genius of American Christianity to realize what it can do when it is set free. There is a bravura, a *virtuosity*, in the style of American spirituality, which is unique and splendid. It doesn't have to pretend, it really can be open and simple and uninhibited, not because these things make up a good lifestyle, but because they happen when people follow Christ. And the real thing can be allied to depth of thought and analysis, without running the risk of merely mouthing the phrases of moral agony and concern, while continuing to be just as self-satisfied and conformist as the kids in the Coke ads.

Perhaps the best way to make my point clear is to sketch a few actual examples from my own experience of both the real and the phony. There was the young

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priest who talked about abortion to a large audience. He was good looking and sexy. He roared with indignation, and poured out wrath on the callous, the indifferent, the peddlers of false psychology and of selfishness disguised as public spirit. He was quite right— but it was a playing on feelings, a using of personal charm and a calculated dosage of blue jokes (we're not prudes nowadays, are we?) to rouse the reaction he wanted. He got it—the audience was fawning on him, but I doubt if much real repentance was going on. And there was another who talked about the goodness of ordinary people, the sense of God to be found in a holiday crowd, the Spirit at work in every place—and the effect was not to waken people to that vibrant and shattering presence, but to lull them with the feeling that they've got it all already, no change of heart is necessary.

There was the nice little Sister with spectacles who talked for half an hour about her need for fulfillment, and how the new freedom from hypocritical submission to superiors meant that she could now find self-respect and use her God-given talents as a witness to the Word. But it was apparently necessary for her self-respect that her talents should find a cash value in competition with other women, and that she should prove this by the quality of her clothes and possessions. She had all the right phrases but what they amounted to was a rehash of the values of commercial society, with a frosting of radical theological-cum-psychological jargon. And there was the group of young married couples, buoyantly dismissing the entire Catholic past in favor of a free, informal community style. They met to discuss and to worship, with the help of any swinging cleric who would come along, and they talked a lot about sensitivity, consciousness-raising, and the moribund condition of the Church and how great they had felt last week when someone read a passage from Isaiah, about the suffering of God's servant. Only there was not much suffering going on, everyone being comfortably incomed, with good quality carpets and well-fed children. So what's wrong? Only the same old thing—the sad notion that having the right ideas is a substitute for radical *personal* repentance. It isn't enough to remove oneself from outworn, destructive institutions, if this is done merely because they are distasteful and boring. What is wrong with the Christian scene can be righted only by those who are *hurt* by what is wrong, who mind the harm that is being done, and seek new ways with humility and compassion and a longing for truth.

There was the young man who said, looking still a little bewildered, that he had suddenly found he couldn't go on in the University, though he enjoyed it a lot. He felt out of place, restless, he couldn't explain exactly why. He didn't denounce anyone, he just knew he had to leave it all and look for a way of life closer to the Gospel one. 'Why me?' his expression seemed to say. He was living with a group of young people who were trying to start a farming commune. He was rather shy, but warm and intelligent and humble. And there was another group of young people, whose idea was to travel around the country with their guitars, preaching Christ with Gospel songs, and talking about him in a quiet, gentle and slightly humorous style. As there were men and women in the group, and they had to sleep wherever they could find a barn or a floor, they had taken temporary vows of celibacy, in a perfectly unpretentious and matter-of-fact way. There was the family in a battered frame house with worn linoleum in the bedrooms, who seemed to provide a place for every sort of local activity and need, from meditation sessions to playgrounds and marriage-counseling, with usually a few youngsters staying in the house because of trouble at home, or an illegitimate baby on the way, or just loneliness.

There was, finally, a charismatic group whose leading characteristic was the extraordinary variety of its members, in age, race, calling and income, but who shared a cheerful seriousness that was never pretentious, and seemed able to do what so many religious groups apparently feel is not even necessary—respect divergences and live with them, rather than trying to find the ideally 'like-minded' community. Not all of them were very interesting or impressive people, and clearly a lot of self-restraint was required to put up with the garrulous, the self-pitying, the crotchety, the naively enthusiastic, the over-emotional. But then that is what brotherhood, and reconciliation, and freedom, and witness, and community (etc., etc.) are all about.

These people, and there are many of all kinds, are the renewal. Where they are is where it's at. We need to analyze, and experiment, and find new ways to understand and express (in words and lifestyles) what God is telling us in changing times. But it has to be real and personal, therefore—in practice—it hurts. That's how it is when it's Christian. But it's where the real growing starts.

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ERNEST KROLL

MIDWINTER SPRING

How saxifrage can tell
This mildness out of season
Is but a winter spell
To bait a winter treason
Makes matter far too nice
For science to surmise
Beyond an inner clock.
But saxifrage is wise
And to its time precise,
And waits beneath the rock
The second age of ice.

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MARCOS—SOPHISTICATED DICTATOR

DANIEL B. SCHIRMER

Concern for appearances is a distinguishing feature

Last February 27 the martial law regime of Ferdinand Marcos held another referendum to determine its support among the Philippine people. A few days later Joseph Lelyveld writing in the *New York Times* from Manila declared the 90 percent margin won by Marcos in the voting to be "par for the course for this kind of exercise by an authoritarian government." Trying to answer the question as to why Marcos went to the bother of having the referendum (the third such since martial law, with results almost identical to the previous two) the *Times* correspondent surmised, "The President may be interested in appearances."

Precisely so. It is concern for appearances which is a distinguishing feature of the Philippine dictatorship, setting it apart from similar governments in South Vietnam, Chile and South Korea. Since its inception the Philippine martial law administration has shown unmistakable and overriding preoccupation with what is currently known as public relations. It has increased the Philippine budget for propaganda from 3 million to 68 million pesos ($10 million). The U.S. press reports that it has engaged the services of a prominent Madison Avenue advertising firm; costly ads promoting the Philippine dictatorship have appeared in the *New York Times* and *Fortune* magazine, and these are only mechanical aspects of what has clearly been a matter of high policy.

Certain essential features of the present government require cosmetic treatment. Consider the following. A top Philippine official admits to 5,000 prisoners held out of 18,000 arrested since martial law was declared. Torture of political prisoners is reported: last summer U.S. Protestant leaders publicized the case of the Reverend Cesare Taguba, a minister to Philippine miners, arrested and given electric shock till his sanity was endangered. In response to conditions such as these the Catholic bishops of the Philippines have criticized martial law for establishing "a climate of fear." Marcos has suppressed what had been a growing nationalist movement, has outlawed strikes to keep wages low and given many new and profitable incentives to U.S. investors, eliciting their approval. Last winter a U.S. corporate executive in Manila (representing some part of the 2 to 3 billion dollar American investment in the Philippines) told a stateside reporter, "Before martial law, we were making recommendations to our home office on how to get out. Now we're recommending how to expand." U.S. bases in the Philippines at Subic Bay and Clark Air Field have also felt the benefit of Marcos' strong man rule. Vice Admiral Ray Peet, U.S. Navy, testified to a House Committee last June that ". . . under Philippine martial law, security of bases has been good.."

Substantial evidence of this sort tends to lead to the conclusion that the present Marcos regime is a repressive dictatorship designed to bolster U.S. economic and military interests in the Philippines. This is precisely the picture the Philippine martial law government has sought to offset by means of its public relations policies from the very beginning.

Two years ago, when martial law was declared, there were dragnet arrests and thousands thrown into jail, but there were no tanks in the streets, no overbearing display of military force; terror and brutality were given a "low profile." Moreover, Marcos loudly proclaimed that his dictatorship was set up to achieve a "New Security" of thoroughgoing reform and that it would stand or fall with its record on much-needed and long-overdue agrarian reform.

But Marcos' pretensions as a reformer appear questionable. This past June Professor Benedict Kerkvliet, of the University of Hawaii, an expert on Philippine agrarian reform, spoke before a House Committee in a hearing on aid to Marcos. While Kerkvliet was critical of Philippine martial law in general, he singled out Marcos' land reform program for special censure, claiming that this program was "all-show, no-go," that Philippine tenant farmers had been given promises, not land. It is significant that the State Department felt called upon to defend the Marcos regime from many of Kerkvliet's criticisms in a letter to Congress signed by Linwood Holton, Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations, and more significant that, even in this context, the Department felt obliged to concede that Marcos' land reform program had so far failed—"Not all efforts have been successful, e.g., the ambitious land reform program has been delayed because the Government initially moved without a full appreciation of the obstacles and costs involved." State Department ad-

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missions to the contrary notwithstanding, Marcos continues to issue proclamations announcing full success for his land reform policy, the last such appearing in the *New York Times* November 24.

Marcos also claims credit for the elimination of street crime. But if mass poverty has anything to do with causing crime, Marcos has failed in this reform too. Last year the cost of living in the Philippines jumped 47 percent, and a recent unpublished report of the Philippine Department of Agriculture indicates that in the past 3½ years average per capita consumption of seafood, dairy products, leaf vegetables has declined, as has consumption of textiles and durable goods. Always underfed and poverty-stricken, now, in the New Society, the Philippine people are poorer and more malnourished than ever.

The Press

It is absolute control of the Philippine press that allows Marcos to tout himself as a reformer, irrespective of his performance. He established this control with martial law, when he closed down most of the Philippine newspapers and set up strict censorship over the remaining "legal" press (in large part already under his thumb). Recently as a mark of "liberalization" Marcos abolished press censorship. Evidently the limits the controlled and legal press puts on itself make such censorship superfluous. Indeed, at the same time that he abolished censorship, Marcos pleaded with the legal press to temper its praise of the New Society with some criticism, lest it lose all credibility.

The controlled press minimizes the violence of the Marcos dictatorship, as can be seen from its treatment of Marcos' unsuccessful efforts to stamp out the Muslim rebellion in the southern Philippines (involving, this past year, the complete destruction of two Muslim-held cities, Jolo and Balabagan, with many civilian casualties and refugees). Informal sources in Manila say that at least 1,500 government troops have been killed, 5,000 wounded, in this war since martial law began; these are high figures for the Philippine Army of 70,000 men. But the Marcos press prints no military communiqués, no hard news of the fighting or casualties at all.

As has been suggested, the other side of press censorship is the self-advertisement that marks this regime, bringing to mind the Madison Avenue techniques of the Nixon administration in the days before the Watergate exposure. Think, for a moment, of Marcos' present embarrassments: an uncontrollable war with Muslim rebels in the south of the country; the spread of the Communist-led guerrilla activities of the New People's Army from Luzon in the north to the Visayas and Mindanao, the central and southern islands; growing criticism from the Catholic and Protestant clergy in the Philippines, and the worsening conditions for the common people.

In the face of all this the Philippine dictatorship has recently put on what can only be described as a bravura display of public relations; Ferdinand Marcos and his wife, Imelda (a political force in her own right), have launched what the *Far Eastern Economic Review* calls a "softsell program to silence critics of their regime."

First came Marcos' release, in September, of Jose Diokno, one of his foremost nationalist critics. Diokno, who had been in jail since the imposition of martial law, is very ill and plans to come to the United States for medical treatment, but his release grabbed the spotlight, putting the thousands who remain imprisoned in the shadow.

In October Mrs. Marcos made her sensational excursion to Peking, visiting with Chou En-lai and Mao Tse-tung, and returning with a Sino-Philippine trade pact. Mrs. Marcos' China trip followed a similar visit to the Soviet Union, and Marcos' apologists like Foreign Secretary Carlos Romulo have hailed the development of relations with the socialist powers as presaging a new independence from the United States. On the contrary, do not these developments suggest that Marcos, as throughout his previous career, hews close to every major turn in U.S. foreign policy? Once following the U.S. to war in Vietnam, now he trails after Kissinger in Peking and Moscow, hoping like his mentor to use the Sino-Soviet split to advantage and inundating the Philippine people, many of whom respect the People's Republic of China, with news of Mrs. Marcos' warm reception by the Chinese leaders.

Next was the surrender of the 27-man Politburo of the PKP, remnants of the Communist Party once active in the Huk rebellion of the '50s (as distinct from the Communist Party that now leads the New People's Army). Making a trip to the presidential palace to have their pictures taken by the press, these men pledged allegiance to the New Society and praised its "reforms." Whereupon Marcos declared them to be in possession of full legality, freeing many of them from the jails where martial law had held them up to now.

After this event Marcos announced an offer of amnesty to all those currently opposed to his regime, Muslim, Catholic, or New People's Army. Again apologists came forward. William Pomeroy, for example, a U.S. citizen once active in the Huk revolt, immediately spoke up to praise PKP legalization, thereby lending credence to the image of "liberalization" that Marcos seeks to promote.

In November Mrs. Marcos made a trip to the United States to inaugurate an expensive Philippine Center in New York City, visiting at the hospital bedside of the ailing Nixon en route, and bringing with her the offer of amnesty to all opponents of the dictatorship in U.S. exile.

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One of these outspoken exiles, Heherson Alvarez, whose opposition to Marcos predates martial law, denounced Mrs. Marcos' amnesty offer as a "farce." Mr. Alvarez has tragic grounds from which to speak, since it is reported that his younger brother in the Philippines, though completely apolitical, was kidnapped, tortured and killed this past summer by the Marcos secret police, presumably to teach those in exile the need to conform.

December saw the release of several hundred prisoners (their families responsible for their "good conduct," they are subject to re-arrest under martial law at any time), and on New Year's Day Marcos set January 30 as the date for the third referendum (first announced by the dictator in November on the occasion of a visit to Manila by David Rockefeller and officials of the Chase Manhattan Bank). Then Marcos postponed the date of the referendum to February 27, so that for two months this question held the spotlight, and debate about the proposed exercise of the vote obscured the dictatorship, as twice before.

New to this referendum, however, was the expression of public opposition to the regime that accompanied it. The Association of Major Religious Superiors (Catholic) called for a boycott of the referendum. Members of the Protestant and Catholic clergy initiated a manifesto opposing it that was signed by 38,000 persons (the biggest expression of opposition Marcos has yet to face), and 5,000 demonstrated in the streets of Manila against martial law.

Finally (as of this writing) on Monday March 3 the *New York Times* carried a story, read by many U.S. voters, that Marcos was calling for a drive against graft and corruption in his government. (Unfortunately for Marcos, the day before this *Parade* magazine, also read by many U.S. voters, carried a story that the Marcos family and that of his wife Imelda were "about to become the two wealthiest families in the Philippines" because of the extortion they had practiced on their former ally, the multi-millionaire Eugenio Lopez).

U.S. Opinion

Mrs. Marcos' trips, the amnesty offers, the referendum and the rest, all these public relations activities, whatever their effect at home, seem designed to influence opinion in the United States—a critical concern for Marcos because of the military and economic aid he receives from the U.S. Congress. As he is doubtless aware, there are in this country a number of groups and organizations actively unfavorable to his government. Members of the Catholic and Protestant clergy have come together in a committee called Christians Concerned About the Philippines. Filipinos and those of Philippine descent are represented by several organizations (Movement for a Free Philippines led by ex-Senator Raul Manglapus, the anti-imperialist Union of Democratic Filipinos, the National Association of Filipinos in the United States, etc.). Oriented especially towards U.S. voters, whether or not of Filipino descent, is the Friends of the Filipino People. What is common to all these groups is their demand for an end to U.S. aid to the Marcos dictatorship (as voiced by Benedict Kerkvliet at the congressional hearings last June). With Senators Cranston (California) and Abourezk (South Dakota) expressing opposition to Marcos, with Congress showing considerable balkiness over aid to Marcos' fellow-dictator Thieu, Marcos and the State Department obviously have cause for concern.

Marcos is worried about the political survival of his regime; U.S. empire-builders regard U.S. bases and economic influence in the Philippines as key to the U.S. position in Asia and have done so since the U.S. conquest and colonization of that country by McKinley at the turn of the century. Perhaps that is why the Marcos dictatorship seems like a replay, in neo-colonialist terms, of early U.S. policies. William Howard Taft, the first U.S. colonial administrator of the Philippines, told a Senate Committee in 1902 it was necessary to maintain the Philippines as a U.S. colony because independence would "drive out capital, prevent capital from coming here." Taft was keenly aware of the need to appease public opinion in the United States. Thus, in explaining his colonial policies to Apolinario Mabini, a Philippine nationalist, Taft said that "the United States wanted to exercise the same sovereignty that Russia or Turkey would" (both notoriously autocratic at the time) "the only difference being that Americans would try to exercise sovereignty more liberally." Then, as if to prove his words, Taft very early announced "amnesty" for all those Filipino nationalists who would cease opposition to U.S. rule and swear allegiance to it.

Today, as U.S. neo-colonial influence experiences worldwide crisis, it is Marcos, the Filipino politician, who exercises dictatorship to protect U.S. capital, who tries to give this dictatorship a "liberal" face, offering amnesty to all those who will desist in their opposition and abolishing press censorshp (in effect dismantling some of the external trappings of martial law in order to preserve the dictatorship).

Taft's policies fooled many U.S. voters and blunted their opposition to budding U.S. empire. Whether his "liberalization" hoax will have the same effect today or not, Marcos' grandstand publicity plays, his "hard-sells," put other U.S.-sponsored dictators like Thieu, Park and Pinochet in the shade, evidently inspiring some envy. For Thieu presently announces he wants to open relations with the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China, and Park buys advertising space in the *New York Times*. Could it be that the Philippines, once known as the United States' showcase democracy in Asia, is now, under Marcos, turning into the United States' showcase dictatorship?

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POLITICS, LABOR AND GEORGE MEANY

JOE HILL

The circle around Meany has retreated into ideological factionalism

One of George Meany's close associates recently characterized the venerable 80-year-old labor chief as a man "open to change and new ideas," backing up this assertion by noting that the AFL-CIO leader had taught himself how to paint at age 60 and to play the organ at 75.

Meany is now experimenting in abstract impressionism, adds the associate, "and plays Dixieland jazz on the organ." Indeed, for someone who has continued to be a presence on the American political and economic landscape under seven Presidents, there does appear to be a slight crack in the exterior of the man who was a pillar of the Cold War from its inception to these uneasy threshold days of détente.

Recent reports out of Bal Harbour, the Florida watering-hole of the AFL-CIO executive council, suggested that the crack is only a hairline, however. For while the Ford administration's economic policies were predictably excoriated, there were the same cold-war resolutions which the labor federation has adopted for virtually the whole of its organizational life. This year will mark the twentieth anniversary of the AFL-CIO merger, and it was at the first convention of the new federation in 1955 that support was accorded "to the territorial integrity of the state of Vietnam."

Yet, only a few weeks previous, insomniacs and early-hour talk show followers found the always entertaining Mr. Meany as a guest on the Dick Cavett show, and it was in this unlikely setting that the onetime Bronx plumber made one of his frankest and most significant admissions of error:

Cavett: You backed Nixon and Johnson on Vietnam. Do you still believe you were right on that?

Meany: No . . . if I'd known then, what I know now, I don't think we would have backed them. But, we backed them on the information that was given by the President of the United States . . . and we felt that this was the man we had to back and we did back LBJ and we did back Nixon . . . If I knew then, what I know now, I would not have backed them . . . no.

Cavett: That's interesting. Is it hard for you to admit that?

Meany: No. When you're wrong, you're wrong and I've lived a long time and I've made a lot of mistakes.

Unlike the policy statements which George Meany has issued virtually by executive fiat in the name of some 14-million American working people for the past two decades, there was no AFL-CIO statement or amplification of these remarks. An occasional remark on a late-night talk show sufficed to become but a footnote to the unquestioned, virtually undebated participation of American labor in its country's disastrous adventure in Southeast Asia.

Yet the admission itself was an indication that the crusty old Meany, who dabbles in abstracts and Dixieland in the years when his peers busy themselves with the obituaries at Sun City or Fort Lauderdale, may be looking back not so much in anger or sorrow, but in somber reflection.

How deep, though, are the cracks in the Meany veneer?

Cavett: . . . everybody knows, of course, that you had to be involved with the CIA.

Meany: That's not so . . . the CIA has nothing to do with our unions and we have nothing to do with the CIA.

Meany's biographer, Joseph Goulden, agreed that virtually everyone familiar with the intelligence community and the interlocking world of State, Defense and Labor in the capitol accepted the AFL-CIO role with CIA. The degree may be one of conscious participation.

Now, with some of the expendable "company" agents coming out of the cold with now-it-can-be-told literary offerings, the Meany cover appears to be further blown. The AFL-CIO chief was an "agent collaborator" according to one Philip Agee, a onetime Latin American CIA functionary in his book, *CIA Diary.*

But does anyone really *care* any more if George Meany is involved in the cult of intelligence? The cynicism which greeted the membership of the Rockefeller Commission to "investigate" the CIA was complete with the observation that Meany's man, Lane Kirkland, is or has been a functionary for a scattering of Rockefeller foundations and committees which have plugged into CIA operations over the years. The AFL-CIO operations abroad—in Africa, Southeast Asia and Latin America—have largely been funded by laundered money channeled through the Agency for International Devel-

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opment. And the latest revelations indicate that the CIA monitored Meany's mail for several years to see that its funds were being properly allocated to chosen overseas fronts. When then Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman William Fulbright called Meany on this in 1969 hearings, the labor chief almost lost his public cool as well as his private cover.

Yet apart from his Vietnam flip, Meany appears to be moving with less than unchecked escalation toward any new domestic political role. For it is still here that the AFL-CIO role is most significant, and on the political stage some observers have come to expect change, but the Meany role—articulated through his political stump rider and spellbinder, Al Barkan—appears to be entrenched Whig-centrist.

A Bitter Pill

The Kansas City mini-convention must have been an especially bitter pill for the labor power brokers, and it ended with the Meany forces just about as influential as they were at the 1972 McGovern-dominated convention when they walked out. Despite the fact that the Committee on Political Education had contributed greatly to the Democratic sweep in Congress only weeks previously, the script was essentially a rewrite of Miami Beach: labor was insulted by the "new politics" practitioners who had taken over much of the party machinery, ignored by many of the old politics crowd and offended by some of the party's policy positions.

Barkan, 25 years George Meany's junior, shares his contempt of the way the party has gone. To both of them, the political world no longer makes sense. Two close allies in labor politics—COPE's top men in Pennsylvania and southern California—were passed over as mini-convention delegates (an unemployed black woman replaced the COPE broker in Los Angeles at Kansas City), and this as much as anything appeared to have blown the Barkan political mind.

Few old-guard Democrat pols have survived the Meany-Barkan wrath: Chicago boss Richard Daley has even made peace with the party, accepting the proportional representation rule which was the only real issue at Kansas City. Special offense is reserved for the man the AFL-CIO chose to take over and remake the post-McGovern party—Chairman Robert S. Strauss, who did little to prevent the embarrassment which the labor delegates suffered at the party charter meetings and pre-mini-convention assemblies.

And the one-time favored candidate, Washington Senator Henry "Scoop" Jackson, has now apparently fallen from favor because he journeyed to mainland China and bucked the AFL-CIO on trade legislation, making his prospects in 1976 even dimmer than they were after his poor showing in the presidential primaries two years ago.

Barkan suffers one of the ironies of the new political game: only months after having helped dispense more than $3 million in COPE cash and having provided an incalculable cadre of trained election workers who helped secure the most liberal Congress in a decade, he is reduced to a telephone booth-type mini-faction within the governing and policy-making apparatus of the Democratic party. If 1972 was a demonstration of what labor could do by defecting from a national campaign, then 1976 was to be a lesson of what it could do by plunging in. Yet the formula did not hold after the elections.

"Al Barkan," said a Kansas City delegate, "turned out to be the biggest McGovernite of them all. He is an ideological purist who wants to take over the party and purge the other side. Isn't that what they accused McGovern of doing?" The inevitable result was Meany's declaration at Bal Harbour that the AFL-CIO would play no role in choosing the Democratic presidential nominee next year.

Labor's pains, as Mr. Meany sees them, do not reside only with domestic politics and a sagging economy. In fact through another spokesman, Bert Seidman, AFL-CIO social security expert, the signals may have already been flashed for a final severance of the American labor movement with its last international tie. Seidman, retiring U.S. worker delegate to the International Labor Organization, indicated last month that the AFL-CIO may quit this worldwide body as well, another shot against détente and a reminder that in one sector, anti-Communism, George Meany will be unlikely to offer any hope of being "open to change or new ideas."

This follows only a few years after the AFL-CIO withdrawal from the World Confederation of Free Trade Unions, which Meany had helped to found as an anti-Communist body in the salad days of the Cold War, but which slid back into fraternal relationships with Communist-bloc union federations. The new labor delegate to the ILO who may preside at this final isolation is Irving Brown, for decades the AFL man in Europe and a name which is familiar to those who have worked the corridors of the intelligence cult at home and abroad.

Despite simplistic characterization of the AFL-CIO as being broken into competing "conservative" and "liberal" factions, the federation is likely to survive both the traumas of domestic and foreign change. Those who have supported and perpetuated Meany's incumbency for two decades see him as a rock against the storms of the new politics at home and détente abroad. Although they pride themselves in being practitioners of the world of *realpolitik*, professionals who would trade the rhetoric of policy positions for real power, the small circle around Meany has retreated into an ideological factionalism which could rival any of the doctrinaire cults of the far left.

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Its mentors are the right wing of the now-deceased Socialist party of Norman Thomas, a small but vociferous group of ideologues who have stonewalled real change and fresh ideas within the federation's high councils. By their assessment, withdrawal symptoms are the only treatment necessary to deal with the forces attacking the body politic and the remnants of the "free world." The indomitable old Meany, with every indication that he will continue on that course, is ready to preside on the bulwarks of his union-made bunker. Those around him have the siege mentality of purists, an unlikely defense against the inevitable change which must surely come to America in the second half of the seventies.

NEW PHASE IN CHINA

JOHN SHARKEY

A moderate faction takes the initiative

The Fourth People's Congress recently held in Peking was not so much a climax as the opening of a new phase in the political and ideological struggle that has embroiled China since mid-1973. The convening of the Congress indicates that the so-called moderate faction identified with Premier Chou En-lai has decided to take the initiative after months of trying to negotiate a compromise with the group generally known as the radicals. The Congress may turn out to be the most destabilizing event in China since the end of the Cultural Revolution.

The moderates are making their strongest challenge in that most sensitive of areas in China, restoration of control by the center, especially by the party apparatus in Peking. It was this superstructure that Mao Tse-tung had to undo when he tried to regain power in the mid-60s by unleashing the Cultural Revolution. Through administrative changes set forth in the new constitution brought out at the People's Congress and by a series of leadership appointments, the threads of power have been brought together in the tightest weave since the period before the Cultural Revolution. For example, once again key figures, in this instance, Teng Hsiao-ping and Chang Chun-chiao, hold major positions in the party, government and military.

Another sign of the aggressiveness on the part of the moderates is the new ideological campaign launched three weeks after the People's Congress in the *People's Daily*. The new drive for the reinforcement of the dictatorship of the proletariat, that is, party control. This, in the words of the editorial, is the "key question" raised by the People's Congress. In keeping with the usual tactics of Chou, the editorial stopped short of urging a purge of dissidents. Zeroing in on one of the greatest strongholds of the radicals, the field of culture, the editorial quoted from the new constitution to the effect that it is imperative to "exercise all-round dictatorship over the bourgeoisie in the realm of the superstructure, including all spheres of culture."

For the past several years, a major influence in cultural matters has been Ching Chiang, Mao's wife and a leading figure among the radicals. Several of the important political skirmishes of the past year and a half have occurred in the area of cultural affairs. Specifically, there were the campaigns against Antonioni's documentary, *China*, against Western classical music, and the denunciation of the regional opera, "Three Visits to Fao-feng," the sponsorship of which by the moderates had been a tentative attempt on their part to break the radicals' domination of cultural affairs.

The real target for the radicals in these campaigns was, of course, Chou and his policy of reaching out to the world—a policy which involved compromises unacceptable to the radicals. Chou, long the pragmatic broker and compromiser, ducked any head-on confrontation at that time. He steadily dodged the blows and diverted the campaigns off into harmless backwaters. His adroitness was nowhere more clearly shown than in his handling of the campaign to denounce Confucius which the radicals used to try to cut down Chou himself. The 6th Century B.C. philosopher was denounced for his policies of trying to "restore the former ruling class" and "to reinstate fallen dignitaries." It was Chou who brought back to power many of the leading figures purged during the Cultural Revolution. Outstanding among these was Teng Hsiao-ping, who had been denounced by the Red Guards as second only to President Liu Shao-chi as a "capitalist roader." Under Chou's direction the drive against Confucius was gradually and subtly altered and eventually defused. It was first changed to a drive to denounce both Confucius and Lin Piao, who had once been Mao's designated successor but who died following an abortive attempt to overthrow the chairman. Then

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more and more emphasis was placed on the attacks against Lin until Confucius became a vague secondary figure in the campaign.

Similarly manipulated was the slogan of "going against the tide." At the 1973 Party Congress, the youthful Wang Hung-wen, who had been catapulted from obscurity in Shanghai to a vice chairmanship of the party, sounded a warning from the radicals on the further dismembering of the Cultural Revolution. Invoking Mao's statement, "Great disorder across the land leads to great order," he told the country that it was right to rebel. The radical media returned time and time again to this theme over the next several months, but the moderates consistently maneuvered to reshape the idea, gradually sapping it of any meaning. It finally ended up that it was all right to rebel—but only in the framework of party discipline.

Through it all, Chou and the moderates waited, temporizing, rebuilding the party apparatus and diminishing the power of the military.

At the Party Congress, Chou said the People's Congress would be held "soon." It was needed to establish the question of succession, to reaffirm foreign policy, to reassure the cadre and to set economic priorities. But in 1974, as the political struggle went on, the Chinese economy faltered, production fell, the trade imbalance ballooned, agriculture struggled to hold its level and the great gulf between China's foreign policy and its resources grew larger.

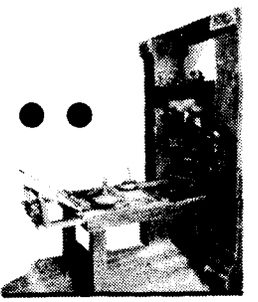
Mao's position throughout the period was aloof, enigmatic. As he has for several years now, the party chairman made no direct comment on internal affairs during the period. The radicals, however, clearly were on the side of Maoist orthodoxy, at least in conformity with Mao's thinking in the period immediately before and in the early stages of the Cultural Revolution. The moderates paid homage to Mao but their policies show more kinship with the technocratic approach of Liu Shao-chi. But in the end Mao apparently decided to support the moderates, at least on the narrow issue of completing the leadership ranks and holding the People's Congress. But there was an aura of extreme reluctance about his decision. Late in the year, reports began to come out of China that posters had begun appearing in the countryside which quoted Mao as saying that the time had come to end the struggle, that it was now time for unity. The date and occasion of the purported statement were never made clear but it is most unlikely that Mao's prestige could have been employed that way without his permission.

The tactics of Chou and the moderates in the period between the Party Congress and this January indicate they were trying to avoid a complete break. Chou undoubtedly would have preferred to have had the radicals join in some coalition. Their price was apparently too high. In any event they remained on the sidelines, their silence speaking volumes, as policy which had been excoriated during the Cultural Revolution was formally reinstated.

Whether the radicals will follow Mao's lead and remain silent until the moderates make a serious misstep remains to be seen. They are still powerfully situated, certainly more so than before the Cultural Revolution. The new campaign to reinforce the dictatorship of the proletariat may be a signal that the moderates are no longer willing to give the radicals the luxury of time.

UNMASKING THE CIA

PRESS



In some situations common sense will get you nowhere. A couple of weeks ago a friend and I were wondering if the CIA had actually assassinated any important foreign leader. Well, he suggested, how about Dag Hammarskjold? This struck me as incredible. Not long after another friend told me that at least one important journalist in Washington believes the CIA once planned to kill . . . Charles de Gaulle. This struck me as even more incredible. Then, on March 8, the *New York Times* reported that the Rockefeller Commission was actually investigating the possibility of a CIA link to the assassination of John F. Kennedy.

It is hard to know what to make of possibilities like these, but the very fact they can be seriously suggested at all is a sign that something is desperately wrong. It was less than 10 years ago that the Washington press corps began to write of Lyndon Johnson's "credibility gap," the discrepancy between his public explanations and his private actions. In retrospect it seems unfair to have blamed it all on one man. The true gap was between the people of the United States and their government, which had grown arrogantly confident it always knew what had to be done, and willing to act secretly when it could not act openly. I take it as a given that our public health cannot be restored until the people regain their confidence that they know—not always in detail, but at least roughly—what their government is doing with their money, in their name.

This will hardly be easy to achieve, and it may not be possible at all, but if it is to be done the press will have to do it. At first glance this may seem an unfairly large responsibility to place on reporters, who have only limited resources and none of the legal tools—the power of subpoena, the authority to grant immunity—required

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to conduct a complete inquiry. The role of the press, however, is not to nail down the details but to focus public attention and create the political pressure without which no sensitive investigation of this sort can be pursued. This was the primary role of the press in Watergate and it is the role so far played in the current investigations of the CIA. At every stage of the controversy it has been public disclosure which has prodded officials to take action.

The process of revelation began in 1973 when James R. Schlesinger was appointed director of the CIA after his predecessor, Richard Helms, was implicated in the Watergate scandal. One of his first acts, a precautionary one in the spirit of the times, was to formally ask agency employes to report to him any "questionable activities" in which they had been involved. Apparently they were forthcoming—700 pages' worth, according to one report—and in August, 1973, Schlesinger issued a formal directive telling them not to do it again. That, he seems to have hoped, was that.

It probably would have been if some of the results of Schlesinger's private inquiry had not reached Seymour Hersh at the *New York Times*. Last December 22 he published a major story charging that the CIA had conducted a "massive" domestic intelligence operation against anti-war activists. Hersh knew only the barest outline of what had happened, but that was enough. President Ford, reacting to Hersh's initiative, asked for a report and received a 50-page document from the current CIA director, Wiliam E. Colby. Later, on January 3, Ford met with Colby and received a private, oral expansion on the written report.

Eventually press initiative made the substance of that conversation public, too. On Friday, February 28, Daniel Schorr reported on CBS television that Ford was concerned that investigations of the CIA would uncover agency involvement in at least three assassinations of foreign leaders. On March 4 the *Washington Star* reported that Ford's concern was based on Colby's oral briefing at the January 3 meeting. Left to themselves the various officials involved would have quietly buried the matter but, again prodded by public disclosures, they had to respond.

The danger now is that the investigation of violence sponsored or actually conducted by the CIA will be limited to sensational plots against specific foreign leaders such as those already mentioned in news reports, including Fidel Castro, Patrice Lumumba, Ngo Dinh Diem, the Haitian dictator François ("Papa Doc") Duvalier and the dictator of the Dominican Republic, Rafael Trujillo. These charges are bad enough, and certainly demand a thorough airing, but there are other kinds of CIA violence which are in danger of being forgotten, involving humbler victims, but a great many more of them.

Following are four areas which reporters ought to investigate now, while there is still a chance of influencing the official investigations by the Rockefeller Commission and the Senate committee headed by Frank Church:

- The Phoenix program in South Vietnam, conceived and run by Colby. Originally called the Counter-terror Program, and later associated with the Provincial Reconnaissance Units, the Phoenix program was intended to "root out" the Vietcong infrastructure. In practice "rooting out" meant the wholesale arrest and interrogation—often by torture—of South Vietnamese civilians who might, or might not, know anything about the local Vietcong cadre. Suspects were routinely killed, more than 20,000 of them in the first 30 months of the program's existence, according to Colby's own figures. Since there was no "legal" process involved, and since the killings were not in the heat of battle, the Phoenix program was terrorism pure and simple. The program, and Colby's involvement, have already been the subject of congressional hearings but they ended inconclusively.
- Vigilante groups in South America. In the Dominican Republic, for example, a right-wing terrorist group called La Banda assassinated at least 200 political opponents in the years immediately following the withdrawal of U.S. forces in 1966. Other similar groups have operated in Brazil, Guatemala and Argentina. The members of vigilante groups were mostly local policemen and there is evidence that at least some of them attended a CIA-financed and -directed "counter-terror" school for foreign police in Texas.
- Counter-insurgency campaigns, also in South America. The CIA has provided money, arms, training and in some cases even American "advisors" to local armies fighting guerrillas in Guatemala, Venezuela, Peru and Bolivia. In Bolivia it armed, trained and accompanied the Ranger Battalion which hunted down Che Guevara in 1967, although the CIA agent on the spot, according to Victor Marchetti, tried to prevent the Bolivians from killing Che after they captured him. Latin American counter-insurgency efforts have often been brutal in the extreme and the CIA has been charged with complicity in torture and assassination. Perhaps the charges are fair; perhaps not. In either case now is the time to investigate them.
- Rumors that the CIA planned, and perhaps even carried out, the assassination of major drug dealers. The federal Drug Enforcement Agency, at one time partially funded by the CIA, has been active in many foreign countries. The current director of the special operations section of the DEA's international intelligence division is Lt. Col. Lucien Conein, a former CIA agent who worked closely with the plotters who eventually toppled and killed Diem in South Vietnam. Conein recently admitted to Nicholas M. Horrock of the *Times* that in May, 1974, he was briefed at length on electronic assassination equipment by a salesman from the now dis-

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solved B.R. Fox Company. The equipment included exploding cigarette packs, telephones, flashlights and other sophisticated devices. If the B.R. Fox Company ever sold any of that equipment, the Church Committee ought to find out when and to whom.

It would be difficult to overestimate the importance of the current investigations, or the energy with which they will be resisted. The CIA has already begun what amounts to a holding operation by giving favorable information to friendly journalists, by emphasizing assassination plots which never got beyond the talk stage, and by suggesting that public exposure will cripple the agency. When Vice President Rockefeller began his investigation of the CIA he said he had three purposes: to protect the national security, to restore confidence in the CIA, and to determine if the CIA had violated its charter. Those guidelines strike me, at least, as being entirely defensive in nature.

It is not only officials who are rallying to the CIA's defense, however. The columnists Rowland Evans and Robert Novak wrote on January 22 that the CIA has already been placed in a "strait-jacket," and even James Reston, in a column published by the *Times* on March 16, defended covert meddling in foreign countries. "It is a form of undercover war," he wrote, "and the Communists are waging it with a vengeance now in

Portugal, while the CIA is virtually helpless in its present condition to prevent the subversion of that strategically important country."

Perhaps Evans and Novak, Reston and Rockefeller are right, and the CIA's covert actions are as necessary as its intelligence-gathering. Perhaps not. The question can't be answered without knowing what it does. The CIA acts in our name and there is too much evidence to ignore that it has behaved just as children do who find they have been left alone. At first they are cautious, expecting a stern adult to arrive at any moment. But after awhile they grow confident, restraints fall away and before long the house is a shambles. The terrible possibility in this instance is that the children may have blood on their hands. A promise to be good in the future is not enough. We must know what has happened, and we can be confident that officials will reveal only so much as public opinion, aroused and focused by the press, insist on knowing. Knowing will not be pleasant, but not knowing is worse. THOMAS POWERS

MASTERS OF DISASTERS

THE SCREEN

Movies are of course a primeval language, a language of mere images, a primary process like our dreams and daydreams. It is not that movies are an anti-intellectual experience so much as a pre-intellectual one. As such, movies are also a natural medium for stories about great disasters. In a disaster flick the medium and the message are perfectly matched because the message also appeals to us on a very primitive level. To be helpless before the titanic forces of nature, as we are in earthquake, fire, or flood, is *the* primordial experience. It is the experience buried down at the bottom of our collective unconscious somewhere, back at the very beginning of all our experiences, where movies like *Earthquake* and *The Towering Inferno* entertain us.

Most critics, and some producers, assume that the characters and story in these disaster films are superfluous. Stars may be necessary, but not scripts. The disaster is everything, the plot nothing. Even Irwin Allen, who started it all by producing *The Poseidon Adventure,* has shown his priorities in *The Towering Inferno* by taking personal charge of the second-unit direction. All those flaming, plunging bodies, the work of the stunt men and the special effects, are where it's at. Allen leaves the direction of principals like Paul Newman and Steve McQueen to one of his hirelings.

Since anything enjoyed on this elemental level where disaster films reach us precludes critical choices, one disaster film ought to be as good as another. The only standard of comparison that might apply is bigness, which is the only standard that applies with any Hollywood spectacular. One disaster film cannot really be better than another; its disaster can only be greater, more widespread, more devastating. By these lights, *Earthquake* should be the best of the current lot because it destroys a whole city. *The Towering Inferno* only does in one building. (*Airport '75* does not even qualify in this league because it is only about how a disaster is avoided, not how one occurs. Far from being our tribal nightmare, it is just the fairytale about the child that put its finger in the dike.)

For my money, though, *Earthquake* is not the best of the lot nor is the difference between it and *Inferno* merely the difference between things being knocked down and things being burned up. I wonder whether each of us who goes to *Earthquake* does not come away feeling a little depressed in the end. We go for the pleasure of watching our entire civilization be destroyed before our eyes, but we come out feeling much more upset than we ought to, much more uneasy than we ever thought the sight of our own ruination would make

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us. The idea was to enjoy the apocalypse, but somehow we have been cheated. In *Inferno* this does not happen, and the difference clearly lies in the story, which turns out to matter after all.

Certainly a story line is not dispensable in these movies. One cannot imagine anybody's going to see a disaster film done like *This Is Cinerama,* as a sort of grandeur without any plot at all. Like other fiction films, disaster movies have to have a text as well as a context, a foreground as well as a background, characters as well as circumstances. In some ways the characters in *Earthquake* and *Inferno* seem to be alike, too, as if there were a standard set of archetypes one rented to make such films, or as if disaster could only affect a certain class of people. The hero in each film, for instance, is a successful architect-engineer who builds skyscrapers. But the fates of these two men, in the face of their respective disasters, make all the difference.

In *Earthquake* Charlton Heston is a veritable Job smitten by an act of God despite his righteousness. He spends half the film refusing to build a skyscraper that would not be quakeproof and being hounded by a bitchy, remorseless wife. Yet when the quake comes he dies trying to rescue her, himself the victim of a disaster whose consequences he has only sought to avoid. In *Inferno,* on the other hand, Paul Newman is guilty as hell. The fire occurs in a skyscraper that he designed and whose faulty wiring is, he himself admits, a result of his own negligence in supervising the construction. Yet in the end Newman's Inferno turns out to be a great, above-ground inversion of Dante's, where men were given punishments to fit their crimes. Here men are exonerated for their crimes. Newman escapes this disaster of his own making unscathed, as does his mistress. In the process he even wins the friendship of the fire chief whose men have had to pay for his sins.

His preoccupation with second-unit work notwithstanding, I think Irwin Allen has been pretty shrewd about his story as well. He knows that there has to be a certain antagonism between the story and the disaster, a kind of individual triumph in the one to offset the general loss in the other. Allen also knows that in the end the story has to make the disaster stand for something larger, not seem something smaller than it itself would be in reality. The latter is what *Earthquake* does because its story has perfect strangers bumping into each other again and again as if Los Angeles were a small town. By working intensely in a confined area, the disaster in *Inferno* seems far more catastrophic than the devastation of all southern California does in *Earthquake.* It appears that a disaster is really much more satisfying when its victims are not just a condensation of society, as the urban cross-section in *Earthquake* is, but a metaphor for society, as the passengers on an ocean liner are, or the tenants in a skyscraper.

Every time he is interviewed, which is as often as he can possibly make it, Allen emphasizes the stars and story in his film over the chills and thrills. "We show ordinary people becoming superheroes," he informed *Time* magazine. "The average guy comes out of the theater wringing wet and wearing a satisfied grin—he thinks he did it." Like everything else in these films, then, the desired response is primitive too: to identify with the hero. This has to be the oldest response to stories there is, the response men had when they first sat around open-pit fires and told each other stories in order to ward off their fear that another tribe or a savage beast attacking in the night would be the end of civilization as they knew it.

Allen may well be right about what goes wrong in *Earthquake.* We do identify with the characters in these films, but who wants to go swirling down the tube with Charlton Heston out of loyalty to a nagging, graspy, overweight wife? What good is a cataclysm if it does not release us from a few such obligations? Having made our commitment to Heston earlier when we thought he would get Genevieve Bujold, we feel betrayed, played for a sucker, at the end. Yet at the same time, Allen also overstates the case for his own film. True, Steve McQueen, in the role of the fire chief, does come across as the type of "superhero" Allen is talking about, but Newman is still the film's center of gravity. The hope that he holds out to us is not that we can be heroic, but something much more modest, and much more seductive—the hope that we might all get away with a little murder as he does.

If Richard Nixon and Paul Newman can get off scot free, then why not me? As we all enter a Depression that is probably, in the back of our own minds anyway, the real pay-off for the Vietnam war, any movie that promises us that men can escape the consequences of their greatest follies is bound to have what *Variety* calls "Big Bofo." The wonderful thing that *Inferno* does for us, and *Earthquake* does not do, is let us off the hook. That is the new American dream we need these disaster movies to express. COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

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THE POWER AND THE PRESIDENCY

THOMAS E. CRONIN

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The President Is Calling

MILTON S. EISENHOWER

Doubleday, $12.95

Pick up another new book on the American presidency and you will doubtless read yet another explanation of what is wrong with the institution once prized as America's most notable political invention. Some hold that the office corrupts the man, others hold that the recent incumbents have corrupted the office. Still others point to our imperialistic values and suggest that America's quest to be number one corrupted societal values and that the presidency merely mirrored these overreaching national tendencies.

Some say the presidency is too powerful, others that it is too weak, with shrewder observers pointing out that it is both too strong and too weak. Indeed it is part of the presidential condition that the presidency is always too strong, always too weak. That is, it is too strong for the safety of the nation as well as for the realization of the ideal of government by the people; yet it is exceedingly weak relative to the expectations we hold for it. Confusing matters further is the paradox in our values whereby we simultaneously condemn great concentration of power in any one location yet we yearn for strong, effective leadership performances from our presidents.

In light of these complexities of presidential government the best-selling book by Rather and Gates is neither very subtle nor satisfying. They contend that the chief problem of the Nixon presidency was its tendency toward palace guard government. Indeed, this is their only theme, their only focus. Nixon, they tell us, became the victim of too closed and too protective a staff system. Nixon's chief helpers turned out to be his major liabilities. The portraits of some of the palace guard figures are often fascinating and the authors provide an unusually good treatment of the rise and fall of Daniel P. Moynihan as a member of Nixon's inner circle.

"Never before had so much authority with so little accountability been delegated to so few," write Rather and Gates. The "few" turn out to be none other than Haldeman, Ehrlichman and Henry Kissinger. The other contenders —Arthur Burns, Daniel Moynihan, John Mitchell and Robert Finch—were never able to penetrate the Haldeman "Berlin Wall." In the end, they all became the victim of Haldeman's penchant for a sterile, paper presidency (Don't bother the President, put it in a memo and I'll see that he reads it when he has some time).

Upon closer inspection of *The Palace Guard,* the villain turns out to be Haldeman alone. For Henry Kissinger is for the most part absolved—doubtless forgiven because of the appearances of policy success. And John Ehrlichman turns out to be largely the creature of and wholly subordinate to Haldeman. Haldeman's zeal for efficiency and insistence upon complete loyalty to Nixon, it is argued, persistently narrowed rather than widened the circle of advocates and advisers from whom Nixon could learn. Presumably, then, Nixon lost contact with reality because Haldeman filtered out the people or the messages which might have let reality in. Haldeman is criticized as the person who kept the cabinet members from talking with the President, who thwarted the advance of any progressive program ideas, and who in moments of stress and crisis had an uncanny knack for inducing Nixon to revert to his early, hatchetman "Old Nixon" style.

The only problem is that they visit far too much explanatory power on one person. Doubtless Haldeman was exceedingly important in the Nixon scheme of leadership. Doubtless too Nixon's introverted personality was reinforced rather than compensated for by Haldeman and company. Still, Rather and Gates spend too much time blaming the doorkeeper, to the neglect of appraising other more significant variables. Thus, there is too little discussion of Nixon's own character and penchant for the cocoon. Too, there is not enough discussion of how societal values shape and constrain presidential performance. Or how the values and priorities of the President's party affect a President. Thus, the most undistinguished performance in domestic policy since the days of Coolidge is blamed on the President's top few administrative aides rather than such factors as ignorance about what would really work, competing and often contradictory national objectives, the inherited problems from Johnson's guns and butter policies, and so on. Milton Eisenhower is perhaps closer to reality when he observes: "How foolish and naive it is to expect the man in the White House, whoever he may be, to solve problems we do not fully understand and cannot agree on." In short, Rather and Gates' book suffers from many of the same shortcomings of television news—too much attention is paid to personality, gossip and style over substance, people over processes, and simplistic over complex explanations.

A more complex and satisfying book is Milton Eisenhower's rambling but perceptive *The President Is Calling.* Eisenhower served in government as

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a civil servant for some 19 years and was on call as a part-time adviser for the next 30 years, most notably as a prime confidant of his older brother. Along the way, Milton Eisenhower served as an assistant to a cabinet officer, chairman of several presidential commissions, special representative to Latin American countries, and in a handful of additional diplomatic and management consultant roles. His book offers personal descriptions of Presidents from Coolidge to Nixon with special attention to his own advisory work with each President since Hoover.

Eisenhower concludes that the presidency is a near-impossible job, certainly too big and exhausting for one person. He views a strong presidency as one that relies on a strong cabinet and that would have the additional help of two appointed vice presidents. He argues too, albeit unpersuasively, for the creation of a single term six-year presidency. Unlike Rather and Gates, Eisenhower has plenty of ideas for making the presidency more effective, chief of which is that a President must make much better and extensive use of advisory commissions. Having served on several himself, he skillfully documents which ones work well and why, which ones fail and why.

But perhaps the greatest charm as well as strength of the Eisenhower study is his appreciation of the limits of the presidency. He makes his reader well aware of the fragility of that institution, of what it can do well and of what it cannot do. His managerial suggestions merit widespread attention. However, his call for separation of the presidency from party leadership and his urging of the six-year single term seem to misunderstand the role of a President as politcal coalition-builder, necessarily engaged in political bargaining and negotiation. Most of the men who have been effective Presidents have also been highly political—in an open, rather than covert, sense of that term. The best of Presidents have been those who understood the importance of political parties and who listened to the rank and file of their parties, and did not condescendingly view the American common person as childlike and dependent on omniscient leaders. On balance, the easily read (yet glib) Rather and Gates book offers less understanding of the modern presidency than do the long and sometimes tedious reminiscences of Milton Eisenhower.

Eight Mortal Ladies Possessed

TENNESSEE WILLIAMS

New Directions, $6

The Goddess and Other Women

JOYCE CAROL OATES

Vanguard, $8.95

ROBERT PHILLIPS

It was Virginia Woolf who first said that, among the many distinctions which can be made, there are two types of fiction writer. First, there are those psychological writers, artists who feel their way, patiently and surreptitiously, in and out of the mind, rendering each character different in minute yet complete ways one from another. Their goal is to make us realize individuals. Henry James comes immediately to mind, as does any writer of the Jane Austen persuasion: take away the "big scenes" and you still have a portrait of *Emma* complete. And the method is not restricted to the novel; the big scene of revengeful murder in Katherine Anne Porter's fine story, "Maria Concepcion," is never shown. Yet we fully comprehend what committing it did to Maria.

On the other hand, there are fiction writers who are in essence poets, identifying each character with a passion or an idea. Engaging characters in significant acts or crises, these writers symbolize and make abstract large issues. Their goal is to make us reach conclusions. A writer, say, of the George Meredith conviction, whose novels often appear "worked-up" from abstract material.

Reading Tennessee Williams' and Joyce Carol Oates' latest collections of stories reminds this reader how totally the work of each agrees with Meredith's self-proclaimed creed for his own fiction: "My method has been to prepare my readers for a crucial exhibition of the personae, and then to give the scene in the fullest of their blood and brain under stress of a fierce situation."

Of blood and brain and stress and ferocity both Tennessee Williams and Joyce Carol Oates are particularly possessed. Both retain a keen sense not necessarily of the complexity of character, but of the splendor of the symbolic scene. One from another in their stories they create scenes to which we can attach abstract names, almost titles for Victorian paintings—The Loss of Innocence, Man's Inhumanity to Man, etc. When they succeed, the brilliance of both writers lies in their capacity to imagine these symbolic acts for their characters, acts which will trip a universal chord in the reader.

Moreover, Williams and Oates, in these two highly interesting collections, invite comparison for another reason. Both books are somewhat unusual in that the protagonist of every story in each is a female. Despite the similarity of fictional method and the apparent similarity of subject, however, the protagonists are actually vastly different. And the books' titles tell the tale: Williams' females are "ladies," if not by temperament, at least by socio-economic signification. That is, each is a woman of "refinement" belonging to a Victorian culture which long since has gone with the winds of change, each a frustrated Southern gentlewoman, out of touch with the real world about her, living in a private (and often, quite mad) world of her own making. The out-dated poet, Sabbatha Duff-Colick, dreams and imagines herself to be America's greatest writer; the ancient Principessa Lisabetta dances to imaginary waltzes with imaginary lovers.

It must be said that this latest gallery of Williams women are all projections of an unsympathetic if not highly misogynistic imagination. The Principessa, for instance, attempts to satisfy her insatiability by forcing the

(Continued on page 57)

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THE PLACE OF PRAYER

JOHN GARVEY

A few years ago it was said by a lot of people that prayer and action were really one and the same thing, or that prayer (as it had been defined and practiced traditionally) was a cop-out, a turning away from the immediate needs of a suffering world. Religious and theological writing circled around ecclesiastical and social structures. What kind of theology would "work" in the modern world? The answers came in large blocks: we had theologies of hope and theologies of revolution, black theology, secular and liberal theologies. Along with this feeling that prayer and contemplation were to take a back seat—if they were allowed along for the ride at all—came talk about the end of religious writing. Several established publishing companies folded, and everyone waited for the domino theory to work on the rest.

Books which deal with church structure and the social impact of religion are still with us—one example is Mary Daly's recent feminist work *Beyond God the Father* (Beacon, $3.95)—but something else is happening now. Books which deal directly and unapologetically with prayer are appearing again, and they are finding a large audience. The writings of Louis Evely, Henri Nouwen, Metropolitan Anthony Bloom, and Brother Roger of Taizé are increasingly popular; bookstores are again stocking John of the Cross; Thomas Merton's writing receives a lot of attention, and there has been a revival of interest in C. S. Lewis. (At the dumb end of the spectrum there is the inane evangelical writing of people like Hal Lindsey and Pat Boone, whose latest book has the incredible title *A Miracle a Day Keeps the Devil Away*.)

The explanations for this trend vary. One unfocused notion is that in hard times people turn to God, something that is not at all established. Another version of the same idea, and a more tempting one, is the pendulum theory: once we were at one extreme, then we swung to the other, and now we are losing momentum and moving toward a dangle in between. But this doesn't get us very far. It makes it look as if the churchy approach and the secular passion which followed its collapse were the poles between which contemporary religious history happens. It is true that dealing openly with structural issues, problems of authority, and alternative theologies—all once forbidden topics—involves a kind of exorcism which leaves us, at the end, free to deal with more substantive things. But the problems remain. You can't shake them off as if they were only bad moods. Is the new tendency toward prayer an abandonment of problems which remain as real as they ever were?

Some people say so. They see this as breathing time, and in a way it is. But this does not mean a conservative victory or a turning away from anything. The resurgence of interest in prayer has not been accompanied by renewed interest in the churches. For many people allegiance to particular denominations is no longer central to being Christian. They seek the worship they need wherever it seems best, and for a lot of those who remain involved with their own denominations problems of assent to dogma are resolved by indifference. (The fact that few people have recently bothered to challenge the doctrine of infallibility, for example, or papal teaching on birth control, has not led anyone to conclude that these teachings are now widely accepted where a few years ago they were the subject of angry debate; they are irrelevant to the lives of most believers and are understood to have little to do with the way Christians should live.)

This indifference may look irreverent to conservative Christians, but I would like to suggest that it may be the beginning of a new kind of reverence, one which bridges the traditional separation between "worldly" and "spiritual" matters; it recognizes that while man does not live by bread alone, man does not live without bread, either. Three recent books illustrate what is new about the recent emphasis on prayer.

In *A Contemporary Meditation on Prayer* (Thomas More Press, $2.45) Eugene Kennedy notes that people are turning to prayer because it is "the human activity *par excellence*; to understand it we have to understand ourselves, especially in our most generous and unself-conscious moments of giving ourselves in friendship and love . . . Prayer never estranges us from any genuine aspect of our personalities. It enables us to enter into our own identity rather than to search for one from the outside." Although this thought can be found in some traditional manuals of spirituality, the emphasis there was often on transcending much of what we know as human nature. Kennedy shows the new emphasis, which is rather on transformation.

Henri Nouwen's *Out of Solitude* (Ave Maria Press, $1.75) illustrates the ways in which social issues, at their depths, can be seen as contemplative problems. Nouwen writes, "What we see, and like to see, is cure and change. But what we do not see and do not want to see is care, the sharing in the experience of brokenness. And still, cure without care is as dehumanizing as a gift given with a cold heart . . . Our tendency is to run away from the painful realities or to try to change them as soon as possible. But cure without care makes us into rulers, controllers, manipulators, and prevents a real community from taking shape."

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The care Nouwen writes about is arrived at only through solitude and reflection, but leads to solidarity and action. This spirit informs the writing and work of Brother Roger, the Protestant monk who is prior of Taizé. In *Struggle and Contemplation* (Seabury, $2.95) he writes of young Latin American revolutionaries, "I have never been more totally behind these young people, and I write to tell them so. They are preparing the day when they will have to take up arms to overthrow tyranny, but they are not searching for their own interests . . . I pray with them. Although I know that the Gospel in me contests the use of violence, I am in communion with them, since oppressive violence so marks the society in which they live."

Whatever else it is, the interest in prayer is not simply an abandonment of old battles or a conservative victory. It is true that a lot of evangelical Christians, including a good many Catholic charismatics, still hold to an individualized approach to prayer which says rather smugly that until the world turns to Jesus it will head toward hell, and to hell with it. But even here there are encouraging signs and a new openness.

All of this promises to have more staying power than most recent trends in religious writing and thinking. Prayer calls for a more personal involvement at deeper levels of thought and living than a theology which deals solely with the issues, and it is an involvement which can result in changed institutions. Much of the new spirit can be traced to people like Simone Weil, whose mysticism did not keep her from active involvement with the issues of her day, and Thomas Merton, whose loyalty to the Church was a good deal more profound and more flexible than that of the "company man." It was Merton who told activists that before you can do anything of value you must find out what you are, what it means *to be*, and the best of the new spirituality reflects this understanding.

beak of a live stork into her vagina! It is a symbolic act, certainly, but one of such obviousness and crudity it evokes humor or disgust rather than understanding. Another character, Miss Coynte of Green, her very name a male chauvinistic pun, attempts to fulfill *her* nymphomania through the taking on and the killing off (in actual as well as the Elizabethan sense) of a parade of well-endowed black studs. The result is fiction at the level of locker-room fantasy, with a pair of notable exceptions. The first, "Complet-

JOHN FANDEL

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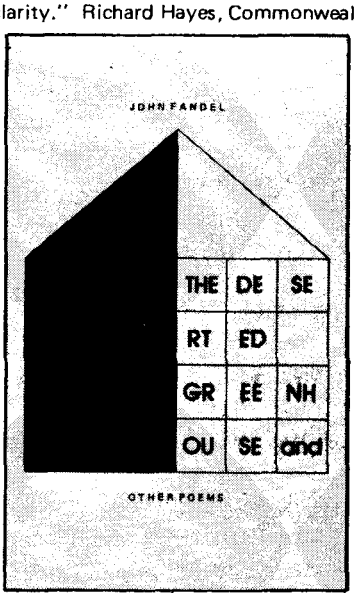

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ed," is an effective story of one woman's inevitable entrapment. The second, "Happy August the Tenth," explores human dependence and sexual ambivalence in a fresh and moving way. Otherwise, these simplistic Williams females have not been granted the compassion and felicitous complications of his earlier women such as Amanda and Blanche. Possessed and mortal, these ladies are also sexist and racist projections.

Joyce Carol Oates' females, on the other hand, are women rather than ladies—and women of the here and now in the women's lib era. While on occasion Ms. Oates has been associated by some critics with the women's movement, this book seems her first deliberate statement on the subject. (Some might argue her last novel, *Do With Me What You Will*, also addressed women's problems overtly.) In these twenty-five stories, far more subtle and probing than Williams' latest, we are given a succession of vital occasions in the lives of women of all classes and mentalities, often pitting the dichotomies of passivity versus destructiveness. In one story, a man symbolically blindfolds his niece, as—Oates seems to be saying—most men attempt to handicap women in order to take advantage of them. Another male tells his female student, "Why do you want to be so good? There is no future for you to be like men. You must marry, you must have babies. . . ."

Throughout the book women are so man-ipulated by unfeeling men that her women, consequently, do not feel real or even visible. In story after story, Oates' women desperately attempt to get free, free from the paradox that a woman cannot feel like a woman without a man, yet a man will not let her feel like a person. In one brilliant passage she cogently charts the impossibility of the situation:

> I felt how he let me go, how he grasped for me and yet let me go, coming to a quick, private finish himself and not able to imagine me any longer. And, since I could not be imagined by him, I returned to substance . . . to flesh . . . and he to substance, to flesh . . . two separate bodies. Suddenly I realized a truth: that he could not love me and I could not love him, love was not possible unless people imagined one another fully, ceaselessly, unselfishly . . .

These stories counterpoint beautifully, though the long book at times seems unrelieved by humor or optimism. As a total, *The Goddess and Other Women* is a thought-provoking document on love, hate, and pain in women's lives. And unlike most documents, it is art of a high order. Miss Oates is one of America's best writers of short stories.

The Church and I

FRANK SHEED

Doubleday, $7.95

AVERY DULLES

In an autobiographical vein, the celebrated street-corner apologist, lay theologian, and publisher, Frank Sheed, here records what he calls "my experience of the Church." For those unfamiliar with his previous works, this will be an excellent introduction to the man. For those already acquainted, these pages will provide a welcome overview of his wit and wisdom.

Rather than as autobiography in the conventional sense, this book might be described as a series of anecdotes and excursuses. One anecdote leads to another, and the stories fairly sparkle with witty repartees. They tell us about notable figures of the "Catholic revival" —Chesterton and Belloc, Martindale and Knox, Dawson and Watkin, Henri Perrin and John Courtney Murray. Occasional bishops and cardinals (such as Bourne, Hinsley, Spellman and Cushing) appear here and there in the book, often to have their foibles exposed. Yet there are no full-length portraits, for the author's interest and talent impel him to concentrate on doctrinal questions. In the last seventy pages he totally renounces the narrative form to give a disquisition on what it means to be a Catholic.

Even the earlier sections of the book are heavily laden with historical and theological reflections growing out of the author's experience as an apologist. For example, he begins one chapter by mentioning a heckler's charges regarding the Inquisition. This becomes the occasion for a thumbnail history of the Inquisition, proving that, though bad enough, it was not quite as bad as many suppose. In another chapter Sheed explains how his lifelong interest in Communism was aroused by his father's conversion to Marxism by some able outdoor speakers. Later Sheed encountered the Communists as the chief rivals of his own Catholic Evidence Guild. Quite naturally Sheed was led into lecturing on Communisim, and these lectures soon led to a book. He summarizes his *Communism and Man*, and then adds several more pages of reflections about Communism—a system in which he finds little merit.

As one who suffered from the limitations of the Catholicism of the first half of this century, Sheed knows how to be properly critical of the defensive clericalism, the isolated seminary training, the unreal casuistry, the flaccid sermons, and the rigid ecclesiastical censorship of the period. Sheed blames the Church of that time particularly for its failure to engage the laity actively in the apostolate. The confusion since Vatican II is in his opinion chiefly due to the widespread theological ignorance and consequent devitalization of the clergy and laity. In the Council documents he welcomes the new emphasis on active participation in the sacraments and in the apostolate. He accepts the Council's ecumenism, perhaps a little reluctantly, but feels that its declaration on the Jews was a disappointment.

In a very sensible chapter on "The Church and Sex" Sheed sets forth (with some minor exaggerations) the deficiencies of the standard seminary teaching on that subject, while opposing, no less strenuously, the permissiveness of the "new morality." He adheres to the rule of sex only within marriage, and exalts the value of self-control. He apparently accepts the

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teaching of *Humanae Vitae,* though he regards the rhetoric of that encyclical as unpersuasive. He is open to the idea of a married clergy, at least if the celibate clergy cannot be maintained, and argues persuasively for a more benign treatment of divorced and remarried Catholics in the Church.

A few statements in the book seem questionable. Sheed's judgments on Hügel and Loisy strike me as excessively harsh, since he seems to accuse them of insincerity and deception. In some cases his reporting of Vatican II is oversimplified. For instance, he states that to find any parallel for the Council's statement that "the study of the sacred writings is the soul of sacred theology" one would have to go back almost to the time of Jerome. He is apparently unaware that this sentence in the *Constitution on Revelation* is a quotation from Leo XIII and Benedict XV, and that it expresses a commonplace of medieval scholasticism.

In a few passages, rather apologetical in tone, Sheed argues too fundamentalistically from the Bible. For example, he attempts to prove the Real Presence from "the plain meaning of the words uttered by Jesus within hours of his death on a matter which he had already declared to be a matter of life and death." Few Scripture scholars today would speak so confidently about the historicity and interpretation of the words of Jesus as given in the Synoptic account of the Last Supper and in John's discourse on the "bread of life."

Sheed's view of the Church, which permeates this volume, stands in the tradition of the "Mystical Body" literature of the generation before Vatican II. It owes much to Karl Adam and Edward Leen—two theologians who, as Sheed points out, lay under a cloud of suspicion in their own lifetime. The functions of the Church, Sheed maintains, are "to do the work for which Christ founded her—teaching doctrine and morals, giving us Mass and sacraments." Revelation, for Sheed, is primarily a matter of providing the believer with a "map of life." The sacraments he views as means of supernatural life, and the Eucharist, in particular, as spiritual food.

In the present eddy of diverse ecclesiologies, it is difficult to be critical of Sheed's. Personally I would have liked to see more attention given to the Church as a mystery of grace and as a sacrament of encounter with Christ. Others will be dissatisfied by Sheed's relative indifference to the reconstruction of the social order. In spite of his words of praise for the social encyclicals of John XXIII and Paul VI, his dominant thought would seem to be that no skill in sociology can make a good society out of bad men. He tells a rather typical story about how, when asked to speak on "The Church in the Underdeveloped Countries," at the Bombay Eucharistic Congress, he used the occasion to describe Catholicism in the "spiritually underdeveloped" countries of Australia, England and America!

Frank Sheed would make no pretense to being a creative thinker or a literary giant. In this book he appears as what he has been for fifty years—a sensible, articulate and dedicated lay apostle. He is able, as few others are, to span the abyss that separates the complacent, static pre-conciliar Church from the turbulent Church of our own day.

While the book is admirably printed and produced, the studious reader will regret that it has no index.

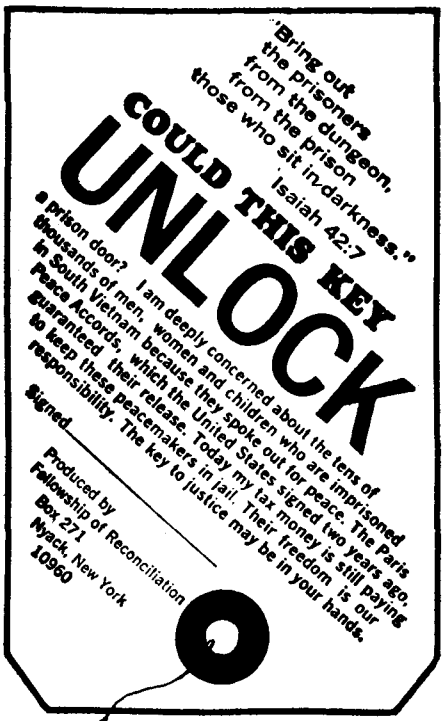
CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 35)

classical situation of "begging the question."

For me the above harkened back to Rev. Richard Neuhaus' article, "The Dangerous Assumptions," *Commonweal,* June 30, 1967.

"Pre-natal life is denigrated as a "piece of tissue," "a woman's mistake," or "vegetating unborn matter." Such language begs the question in a disgraceful manner. Biology and everyday experience teach us that life is to be understood in continuity with life.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Thus either side may be criticized for begging the question. I believe Father Decker would agree from the position he took in his debate.

I should hope that Father Decker is doing everything he possibly can to assist in reaching a consensus among those trained in medicine, philosophy and theology to determine when the life of the human begins. It is unfortunate when there is doubt as to the exact time, that rather than protect the life of that that has the potentiality of becoming the human person, we allow it to be destroyed. Many of us wonder why the Court does not protect the life of that which at the time of conception has the irreversible potentiality of becoming the human person?

JAMES P. RILEY

Weston, Mass.

To the Editors: Reflecting on Father Decker's article, I am reminded strongly of Our Lord's succinct observation, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house" (Matt. 13, 57).

A prophet is one sent by God to speak for Him not only about the future but also about the past and the present. Our Lord called Himself a prophet in that meaning and it applies to those whom He would send to speak for Him.

The magisterium occupies that position of prophecy or the word, Catholic, is disemboweled. Nowhere in his article does Father Decker give recognition to this primary fact in the appraisal of the *Roe-Wade* Decision. Repeatedly, clearly, and with the utmost seriousness the magisterium has spoken all over the world against the legalization of abortion by civil governments. Yet Father Decker dismisses their words and condemns the response of the rest of us who follow them as "myopic," "strident," "reprehensible" and even "less Christian" than the Supreme Court itself!

It is sad to read his repetition of the weary canard that we Catholics are imposing sectarian morality on a free society. Are Catholic Americans to be mute and so disenfranchised as citizens . . . when they speak up for the inviolability of human life?

(REV.) PAUL J. MURPHY, S.J.

Bloomington, Pa.

To the Editors: Two years after our US Supreme Court ruled on abortion [Jan. '73] a cleric law dean lucidly proves with serene prose that the Court's "More Christian Than Its Critics." Indeed it is.

But Father Decker appears to juxtapose the historical sequence and interaction between civic and religious traditions and ideologies, although that history reinforces his main thesis. And he wrongly attributes to the whole "U.S. Catholic community" (99 and 44/100 percent pure laity) what properly applies to the "episcopal party." . . .

This episcopal party wrongfully presents itself to the wider civic community as "the Catholic party" knowing it lacks laity support in this issue. Indeed having aborted the National Pastoral Council (another mandate of Vatican II), so congenial to U.S. civic tradition, this party has no machinery for consulting the "U.S. Catholic community."

By confusing the Court's "Critics," Father Decker unwittingly helps perpetuate the deliberate and false myth that the episcopal party represents "the U.S. Catholic community."

Properly to distinguish between these two parties and between civic and religious ideologies and their histories is critical to the adequate definition of the problem central to revitalizing the Western Church!

Hosannah. Decker's is a wonderful and fertile statement. E. Courtney Murray yet lives. . . .

DR. JOSEPH T. SKEHAN
President, National Association of Laity

Nashotah, Wisc.

To the Editors: As an Anglican Catholic opposed to abortion, I have been persuaded that the case against the legalizing of this crime would best be furthered, not by the invoking of magisterial pronouncements, but a careful examination of the legal and philosophical dimensions of the question.

May I say that such a persuasion is

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strengthened in me by the recent treatment of abortion in *Commonweal*. While Dr. Trinkaus' use of an analogy with the Dred Scott issue was marked by a compelling logic, Father Decker's remarks were based entirely on an understanding of Vatican II which would both surprise and shock the bishops who gathered at that Council.

(REV.) PATRICK HENRY REARDON

Fredericksburg, Va.

To the Editors: Please let me help to clarify the issues in the Decker-Trinkaus abortion debate. As might be expected, much of the disagreement is a matter of semantics.

As to the question of when life begins, Webster gives 21 different definitions of life. When scientists speak of life they mean biological life. Biological life may end, but does not begin, because it is continuous. The sperm and ovum are living links between the lives of the parents and that of the child. Even ardent abortion advocate Garrett Hardin now admits this (see *Psychology Today*, Nov. 1974). If someone speaks of a life that begins at viability, birth, etc., they are speaking of some other kind of life, and should say what kind that is.

The word human also means different things to different people, but scientifically it is determined by genetic constitution. Genetically speaking, humanity, like life, is continuous: the sperm and ovum are human gametes. But the sperm and ovum are not genetically complete individuals. At fertilization there is formed a new and unique individual that will never be anything but alive or anything but human until it dies. These statements are no more matters of opinion than any other science has to offer. If anyone claims to be a scientist, yet denies them, his credentials should be suspect.

Ordinarily "human being" means a living human individual. Scientificially, the life of a human being begins at fertilization. No philosophy, ethics, theology or law can ignore these facts and still claim to be on sound ground. Scientifically, *Roe* v. *Wade* is replete with error.

Science has nothing to say about the word person. Its definition can be approached in either of two ways. Objectively, a person is a living human being, regardless of state of perfection, development or organization. But people can insist on a subjective definition, and here lies the danger. A subjective definition is subject to manipulation, and eventually gets down to the point that a person is whatever I (we/society/the Supreme Court/the power structure) say it is. The Supreme Court took this approach. To make matters worse, they combined it with criteria like "persons in the whole sense" and "capability of meaningful life" so that even pro-abortion Yale law professor John Hart Ely calls *Roe* v. *Wade* a bad decision, a frightening decision, and a dangerous decision.

We are preparing documented support for the above position and will be glad to send a copy of the final version to anyone who requests it.

EDWARD C. FREILING
President, Scientists for Life

Washington, D.C.

To the Editors: Many thanks for the reasoned and yet thoroughly provocative debate on abortion.

I do not believe I have had the pleasure of meeting Father Decker. But I do remember the enjoyment in debating Walter Trinkhaus, a perfectly delightful person, whose absolutely astounding beliefs are usually advanced with such consummate skill as to be more charming than cunning.

I am disappointed, however, to see this skilled attorney (and as I recall clean-up hitter in the California anti-abortion line up) compare *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton* to the Dred Scott Decision.

For this rather desperate stratagem amounts to the degradation of a black human being to the level of an embryo. This tortuous concept, at the heart of the so-called right-to-life movement, is the attempt to equate a miscarriage (an abortion which is not induced) with the victim of, say terminal meningitis.

At the same time, Mr. Trinkhaus assures us: "In contraception, however, there is no living victim."

Since the sperm and the ovum are both alive and human, and since contraception destroys their possibility of becoming a human being nine or so months after conception, I am unable to agree with the Trinkhaus statement that there is no living victim. But at the same time I am relieved to note the distinct change from those days not so very long ago in which backers of Margaret Sanger, like my father, were

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being charged with "the deadly sin of Onanism" or "race suicide" by leaders of the stature of the late Patrick Cardinal Hayes of New York.

Mr. Trinkhaus contends that a fertilized ova is "immeasurably different" from ununited egg and sperm cells.

"Immeasurably" different? I will agree, in part. For the difference in these microscopic entities can hardly be measured with the naked eye. And in connection with this statement, I recall the testimony in Sacramento of one of Mr. Trinkhaus' cohorts, the distinguished director of Cardinal McIntyre's seminary in Camarillo, who relieved everyone by testifying that the obligation to baptize an "unborn child" exists "only if you can find it." . . .

(REV.) LESTER KINSOLVING

Pittsburgh, Pa.

To the Editors: Father Decker's "More Christian Than Its Critics" refers to a "Catholic" anti-abortion stance, but the pro-life movement includes Jews and Protestants. Unkindest cut of all is the quotation marks: we in our little ghetto are supposed to understand that pro-life is not a real conviction, only a product of early conditioning. Or, am I to abjure the Faith to be an effective pro-life spokesperson?

Is justice supposed to be so blind that Father Decker can ignore the same biological facts the Court ignored? Grisez *(Abortion: The Myths, the Realities, and the Arguments)* gives them in abundance, from valid sources. Pro-abortion people don't argue about fetal life; they argue about quality of life. If the law is an amoral chess game, then Father Decker's statements are incontrovertible. But some kind of earthy humanity suggests that freedom of conscience is useless unless you are alive to exercise it. The Court's decision doomed thousands of unborn babies to be forever denied that right—or any rights.

Father Decker's elegant logic might well suffer were he to think of his own right to life as depending upon the conscience of a threatened person stronger than he, or were he to scrutinize some killed unborn babies. Then might he trade the Latinate "destruction of the fetus" for the phrase Wulfstan used a thousand years ago: *child-murder.*

JOAN R. HUBER
University of Pittsburgh

Clinton, N.Y.

To the Editors: I read Fr. Raymond Decker's article relative to abortion with disbelief and disillusionment. As a physician, educator, and father, I found Father Decker's words so adaptive to modern thinking as to represent more defeat than conviction or responsible theology. He employs many, if not all, of the arguments peddled out by those who will not take a firm stand against abortion. Every moral issue these days seems to be relegated to a penumbra where the issue tends to languish and no one seems obligated to stand firmly on a point of view, particularly if it is a bit uncomfortable. . .

Vatican Council II, in its most wild interpretation, does not advocate a ho-hum attitude toward abortion. Responsible anti-abortion groups in this coun-

Struggle for Justice

THERE ARE NEARLY forty million women in the labor force and most of them work because of economic need. Nearly two-thirds of them are single, divorced, widowed, or separated, or have husbands whose earnings fall below the poverty level. It is ten years since the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was passed, specifically prohibiting *discrimination on the basis of sex* in all aspects of employment. Enforcement agencies simply do not take these laws seriously. Women's groups point out that, even in the recent actions brought against the steel and telephone companies enforcing equal opportunities for women and minorities the government settled for only token back pay for the women who had experienced discrimination. . . .

But most disturbing of all is that the poorest of the poor are women workers. Two out of five poor families are headed by women. Fifty-seven percent of all black women workers—lowest paid on all scales—are not covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act. And until the passage of the minimum wage law this year the median wage of full-time, year-round household workers was less than $2,000. It remains to be seen what enforcement will mean for them. . . .

—Abigail McCarthy,
Commonweal, May 24, 1974

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try are not trying to enforce a brand of politics or a religion on the people in general. They are merely trying to save the lives of fellow citizens, their neighbors if you will. The unborn child, no matter where he is in that exciting, creative nine months before he is seen, is a citizen as valuable as any other citizen, and a creature greatly in need of as much justice as society can provide for him. Because the state deems him unworthy doesn't mean that the issue is closed. Many governments have attempted this tactic, and we don't need to get into that, although recent European history is a gruesome teacher. . .

ROGER D. MOORE, M.D.
Upstate Medical Center, Syracuse

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Michael Novak (Cont.)

portant task, but he is also in some ways a guardian of the symbolic materials that enter into the nation's psyche every day.

(7) A critic of television must locate himself psychologically, then, in a somewhat different position from the critic of movies or of books. The critic of serious books and serious movies can assume that he or she is engaging in an activity that will appeal to a "discriminatiing" audience. Moreover, such critics write within a well-worked and refined universe of discourse. This universe includes, for example, all similar critics who have written in the area; then the artists or writers who practice the arts; and then their relatively select audience. A rather priestly role feels quite natural to such critics. Television presents, by contrast, something like a Protestant reformation in fields of criticism: everyone his own experience.

The skills required of a serious critic of *Archie Bunker, Kung Fu,* or the *Smothers Brothers* do not at present coincide with a rise in status, of the sort that Pauline Kael or Stanley Kauffmann or Edmund Wilson have attained in other symbolic fields. Works the latter comment on may be works experienced by a few, subjected to criticism by even fewer. Whereas the television critic must match himself or herself against the skills and perceptions of millions. The point of television criticism may not be to find in shows materials that no one else in the world could see except the privileged critic and a few of his peers. Quite the opposite.

The good television critic, perhaps, would be able to put into words, and to articulate perceptions, that a great many viewers could be led to share. They too, after all, have gone through the experience of the works in question, and have their memories as viewers to hold as a check against what the critic is saying.

The critic might help them to see what is working, and why; how certain effects were attained; how to compare them with other effects in other shows in other places; how the symbolic materials of the show are shoddy, or genuine, or complex, or stereotyped; and at which precise moments a show fulfills its ideal possibilities, and when and why it fails.

Virtually all a critic's moves could be followed by a very large audience, so that they could learn to see in a more perfect way. The critic may be "ahead" of his or her audience, and have skills that most do not; but his or her *return* must always be to a medium shared by all.

It is legitimate to compare the deliverances of television to those of cinema and of books. Probably books are better instruments of subtlety and introspection, and cinema of vicarious intensity. The dramatic range of television is at present severely constricted. Yet perhaps for a time we should examine prime time television on its own terms, measuring with more accurate appreciation what it in fact does, without rushing on to compare it to what it does not (or cannot) do. What it does is powerful enough.

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REVIEWERS

JOHN GARVEY is an editor at Templegate Publishing in Springfield, Ill. This is the first of a regular column on books on religion that he will write for *Commonweal.*

THOMAS E. CRONIN is the author of the forthcoming *The State of the Presidency* (Little-Brown).

ROBERT PHILLIPS is currently completing a study of William Goyen's fiction for Twayne's United States Authors Series.

FATHER AVERY DULLES, S.J., recently published *Models of the Church* (Doubleday).

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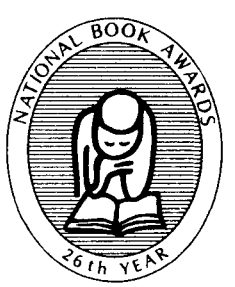
William Weaver: INVISIBLE CITIES by Italo Calvino (A Helen & Kurt Wolff Book/Harcourt Brace Jovanovich)



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